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ANCIENT LEGENDS,

MYSTIC CHARMS, AND SUPERSTITIONS

OF IRELAND.

WITH SKETCHES OF THE IRISH PAST.

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BY

LADY WILDE.

("*SPERANZA.*")

TO WHICH IS APPENDED
A CHAPTER ON "THE ANCIENT RACE OF IRELAND,"
BY THE LATE SIR WILLIAM WILDE.

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LEGENDS OF ANIMALS.

THERE are no traces in Irish legend of animal worship, but many concerning the influence of animals upon human life, and of their interference with human affairs.

The peasants believe that the domestic animals know all about us, especially the dog and the cat. They listen to everything that is said; they watch the expression of the face, and can even read the thoughts. The Irish say it is not safe to ask a question of a dog, for he may answer, and should he do so the questioner will surely die.

The position of the animal race in the life scheme is certainly full of mystery. Gifted with extraordinary intelligence, yet with dumb souls vainly struggling for utterance, they seem like prisoned spirits in bondage, suffering the punishment, perhaps, for sin in some former human life, and now waiting the completion of the cycle of expiation that will advance them again to the human state.

The three most ancient words in the Irish language are, it is said, *Tor*, a tower; *Cu*, a hound, and *Bo*, a cow. The latter word is the same as is found in the Greek *Bosphorus*, and in the nomenclature of many places throughout Europe.

Concerning Dogs.

Some very weird superstitions exist in Ireland concerning the howling of dogs. If a dog is heard to howl near the house of a sick person, all hope of his recovery is given up, and the patient himself sinks into despair, knowing that his doom is sealed. But the Irish are not alone in holding this superstition. The Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans all looked on the howling of the dog as ominous. The very word *howling* may be traced in the Latin *ululu*, the Greek *holuluzo*, the Hebrew *hululue*, and the Irish *ulluloo*. In Ireland the cry raised at the funeral ceremony was called the *Caoin*, or keen, probably from χαων, a dog. And this doleful lamentation was also common to other nations of antiquity. The Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans had their hired mourners, who, with dishevelled hair and mournful cadenced hymns, led on the melancholy parade of death. Thus the Trojan women keened over Hector, the chorus being led by the beautiful Helen herself.

The howling of the dog was considered by these nations as the first note of the funeral dirge and the signal that the coming of death was near.

But the origin of the superstition may be traced back to

Egypt, where dogs and dog-faced gods were objects of worship; probably because Sirius, the Dog-star, appeared precisely before the rising of the Nile, and thereby gave the people a mystic and supernatural warning to prepare for the overflow.

The Romans held that the howling of dogs wa a fatal presage of evil, and it is noted amongst the direful omens that preceded the death of Cæsar. Horace also says that Canidia by her spells and sorceries could bring ghosts of dogs from hell; and Virgil makes the dog to howl at the approach of Hecate.

It is remarkable that when dogs see spirits (and they are keenly sensitive to spirit influence) they never bark, but only howl. The Rabbins say that "when the Angel of Death enters a city the dogs do howl. But when Elias appears then the dogs rejoice and are merry." And Rabbi Jehuda the Just states, that once upon a time when the Angel of Death entered a house the dog howled and fled; but being presently brought back he lay down in fear and trembling, and so died.

This strange superstition concerning the howling of dogs, when, as is supposed, they are conscious of the approach of the Spirit of Death, and see him though he is shrouded and invisible to human eyes, may be found pervading the legends of all nations from the earliest period down to the present time; for it still exists in full force amongst all classes, the educated, as well as the unlettered peasantry; and to this day the howling of a dog where a sick person is lying is regarded in Ireland in all grades of society with pale dismay as a certain sign of approaching death.

The Irish may have obtained the superstition through Egypt, Phœnicia, or Greece, for it is the opinion of some erudite writers that the Irish wolf-dog (*Canis gracius Hibernicus*) was descended from the dogs of Greece.

It is strange and noteworthy that although the dog is so faithful to man, yet it is never mentioned in the Bible without an expression of contempt; and Moses in his code of laws makes the dog an unclean animal, probably to deter the Israelites from the Egyptian worship of this animal. It was the lowest term of offence—"Is thy servant a dog?" False teachers, persecutors, Gentiles, unholy men, and others sunk in sin and vileness were called dogs; while at the same time the strange prophetic power of these animals was universally acknowledged and recognized.

The Romans sacrificed a dog at the Lupercalia in February. And to meet a dog with her whelps was considered in the highest degree unlucky. Of all living creatures the name of "dog" applied to any one expressed the lowest form of insult, contempt, and reproach. Yet, of all animals, the dog has the noblest qualities, the highest intelligence, and the most enduring affection for man.

The Irish wolf-dog had a lithe body, a slender head, and was fleet as the wind. The form of the animal is produced constantly in Irish ornamentation, but the body always terminates in endless twisted convolutions. The great Fionn MaCoul had a celebrated dog called "Bran," who is thus described in the bardic legends: "A ferocious, small-headed, white-breasted, sleek-haunched hound; having the

eyes of a dragon, the claws of a wolf, the vigour of a lion, and the venom of a serpent."

In the same poem Fionn himself is described in highly ornate bardic language, as he leads the hound by a chain of silver attached to a collar of gold: "A noble, handsome, fair-featured Fenian prince; young, courteous, manly, puissant; powerful in action; the tallest of the warriors; the strongest of the champions; the most beautiful of the human race."

Bran, like his master, was gifted in a remarkable degree with the foreknowledge of evil, and thus he was enabled to give his young lord many warnings to keep him from danger.

Once, when victory was not for the Fenian host, Bran showed the deepest sorrow.

"He came to Fionn, weary and wet, and by this hand," says the chronicler, "his appearance was pitiful. He lay down before the chief, and cried bitterly and howled.

"'"'Tis likely, my dog,' saith Fionn, 'that our heads are in great danger this day.'"

Another time, the Fenian host having killed a huge boar, Ossian, the bard and prophet, ordered it to be burnt as of demon race. Bran, hearing this, went out readily and knowingly, and he brings in three trees in his paw; no one knew from whence; but the trees were put into the fire and the great pig was burnt, and the ashes of the beast were cast into the sea.

The Fenian princes generally went to the hunt accompanied altogether by about three thousand hounds; Bran leading, the wisest and fleetest of all. The chiefs formed a goodly

army, a thousand knights or more—each wearing a silken shirt and a *chotan* of fine silk, a green mantle and fine purple cloak over to protect it; a golden diademed helmet on the head, and a javelin in each man's hand.

Once, a chief, being jealous of the splendour of the Fenian princes, became their bitter enemy, and set himself to curse Bran above all hounds in the land.

But Fionn answered, "If thou shouldest curse Bran, my wise, intelligent dog, not a room east or west in thy great mansion, but I will burn with fire."

So Bran rested on the mountain with Fionn, his lord and master, and was safe from harm.

Yet, so fate decreed, Bran finally met his death by means of a woman. One day a snow-white hart, with hoofs that shone like gold, was scented on the hill, and all the hounds pursued, Bran leading. Hour after hour passed by, and still the hart fled on, the hounds following, till one by one they all dropped off from weariness, and not one was left save Bran. Then the hart headed for the lake, and reaching a high cliff, she plunged from it straight down into the water; the noble hound leaped in at once after her, and seized the hart as she rose to the surface; but at that instant she changed into the form of a beautiful lady, and laying her hand upon the head of Bran, she drew him down beneath the water, and the beautiful lady and Fionn's splendid hound disappeared together and were seen no more. But in memory of the event the cliff from which he leaped is called Coegg-y-Bran; while the lake and castle beside it are called *Tiernach Bran* (the lordship of Bran) to this day. So the name and memory of Fionn's hound, and his wisdom

and achievements are not forgotten by the people; and many dogs of the chase are still called after him, for the name is thought to bring good luck to the hunter and sportsman. But the *Cailleach Biorar* (the Hag of the Water) is held in much dread, for it is believed that she still lives in a cave on the hill, and is ready to work her evil spells whenever opportunity offers, and her house is shown under the cairn, also the beaten path she traversed to the lake. Many efforts have been made to drain the lake, but the Druid priestess, the Hag of the Water, always interferes, and casts some spell to prevent the completion of the work. The water of the lake has, it is said, the singular property of turning the hair a silvery white; and the great Fionn having once bathed therein, he emerged a withered old man, and was only restored to youth by means of strong spells and incantations.

In Cormac's Glossary there is an interesting account of how the first lapdog came into Ireland, for the men of Britain were under strict orders that no lapdog should be given to the Gael, either of solicitation or of free will, for gratitude or friendship.

Now it happened that Cairbré Musc went to visit a friend of his in Britain, who made him right welcome and offered him everything he possessed, save only his lapdog, for that was forbidden by the law. Yet this beautiful lapdog was the one only possession that Cairbré coveted, and he laid his plans cunningly to obtain it.

There was a law at that time in Britain to this effect:

"Every criminal shall be given as a forfeit for his crime to the person he has injured."

Now Cairbré had a wonderful dagger, around the haft of which was an adornment of silver and gold. It was a precious jewel, and he took fat meat and rubbed it all over the haft, with much grease. Then he set it before the lapdog, who began to gnaw at the haft, and continued gnawing all night till the morning, so that the haft was spoiled and was no longer beautiful.

Then on the morrow, Cairbré made complaint that his beautiful dagger was destroyed, and he demanded a just recompense.

"That is indeed fair," said his friend, "I shall pay a price for the trespass."

"I ask no other price," said Cairbré, "than what the law of Britain allows me, namely, the criminal for his crime."

So the lapdog was given to Cairbré, and it was called ever after *Mug-Eimé*, the slave of the haft, which name clung to it because it passed into servitude as a forfeit for the trespass.

Now when Cairbré brought it back to Erin with him, all the kings of Ireland began to wrangle and contend for possession of the lapdog, and the contention at last ended in this wise—it was agreed that the dog should abide for a certain time in the house of each king. Afterwards the dog littered, and each of them had a pup of the litter, and from this stock descends every lapdog in Ireland from that time till now.

After a long while the lapdog died, and the bare shell being brought to the blind poet Maer to try his power of divination, he at once exclaimed, through the prophetic power and

vision in him, "O Mug-Eimé! this is indeed the head of Mug-Eimé, the slave of the haft, that was brought into Ireland and given over to the fate of a bondsman, and to the punishment of servitude as a forfeit."

The word hound entered into many combinations as a name for various animals. Thus the rabbit was called, "the hound of the brake;" the hare was "the brown hound;" the moth was called "the hound of fur," owing to the voracity with which it devoured raiment. And the other is still called by the Irish *Madradh-Uisgue* (the dog of the water).

The names of most creatures of the animal kingdom were primitive, the result evidently of observation. Thus the hedgehog was named "the ugly little fellow." The ant was "the slender one." The trout, *Breac*, or "the spotted," from the skin. And the wren was called "the Druid bird," because if any one understood the chirrup, they would have a knowledge of coming events as foretold by the bird.

Concerning Cats.

—:o:—

Cats have been familiar to the human household from all antiquity, but they were probably first domesticated in Egypt, where, so far back as two thousand years ago, a temple was dedicated to the goddess of cats—Bubastis Pasht—represented with a cat's head. The Greeks had this feline pet of the house from Egypt, and from Greece the cat race, such as we have it now, was disseminated over Europe. It was a familiar element in Greek household life, and if anything was broken, according to Aristophanes, the phrase went then as now, "The cat did it." But cats were never venerated in Greece with religious adoration as in Egypt, the only country that gave them Divine honour, and where, if a cat died, the whole family shaved off their eyebrows in token of mourning.

The Irish have always looked on cats as evil and mysteriously connected with some demoniacal influence. On entering a house the usual salutation is, "God save all here, except the cat." Even the cake on the griddle may be blessed, but no one says, "God bless the cat."

It is believed that the devil often assumes the form of these animals. The familiar of a witch is always a black

cat; and it is supposed that black cats have powers and faculties quite different from all others of the feline tribe. They are endowed with reason, can understand conversations, and are quite able to talk if they considered it advisable and judicious to join in the conversation. Their temperament is exceedingly unamiable, they are artful, malignant, and skilled in deception, and people should be very cautious in caressing them, for they have the venomous heart and the evil eye, and are ever ready to do an injury. Yet the liver of a black cat has the singular power to excite love when properly administered. If ground to powder and infused into a potion, the recipient is fated to love passionately the person who offers it and has worked the charm.

An instance of this is narrated as having happened not very long ago. A farmer's daughter, a pretty coquette, attracted the attention of the young squire of the place. But though he was willing to carry on a flirtation, the young gentleman had no idea of debasing his proud lineage by an alliance. Yet a marriage was exactly what the girl desired, and which she was determined to accomplish. So she and a friend, an accomplice, searched the village till they found a black cat, black as night, with only three white hairs on the breast. Him they seized, and having tied up the animal in a bag, they proceeded to throw him from one to the other over a low wall, till the poor beast was quite dead. Then at midnight they began their unholy work. The liver and heart were extracted in the name of the Evil One, and then boiled down until they became so dry that they could easily be reduced to a powder, which was kept for use when opportunity offered. This soon came; the young squire

arrived one evening as usual, to pay a visit to the pretty Nora, and began to make love to the girl with the ordinary amount of audacity and hypocrisy. But Nora had other views, so she made the tea by her little fire in a *black* teapot, for this was indispensable, and induced her lover to stay and partake of it with her, along with a fresh griddle cake. Then cunningly she infused the powder into his cup and watched him as he drank the tea with feverish anxiety. The result was even beyond her hopes. A violent and ardent passion seemed suddenly to have seized the young man, and he not only made earnest love to the pretty Nora, but offered her his hand in marriage, vowing that he would kill himself if she refused to become his lawful bride. To avoid such a catastrophe, Nora gently yielded to his request, and from that evening they were engaged. Daily visits followed from the young squire, and each time that he came Nora took care to repeat the charm of the love powder, so that the love was kept at fever heat, and finally the wedding day was fixed.

The family of the young squire were, however, not quite contented, especially as rumours of witchcraft and devil's dealings were bruited about the neighbourhood. And on the very eve of the marriage, just as the young man was pouring forth his vows of eternal love to the bride expectant, the door was burst open and a body of men entered, headed by the nearest relations of the squire, who proceeded at once to belabour the young bridegroom with hazel sticks in the most vigorous manner. In vain the bride tried to interpose. She only drew the blows on herself, and finally the young man was carried away half

stunned, lifted into the carriage and driven straight home, where he was locked up in his own room, and not allowed to hold any communication with the bride-elect.

The daily doses of the powder having thus ceased, he began to recover from the love madness, and finally the fever passed away. And he looked back with wonder and horror on the fatal step he had so nearly taken. Now he saw there was really witchcraft in it, which the power of the hazel twigs had completely broken. And the accomplice having confessed the sorcery practised on him by Nora and herself, he hated the girl henceforth as much as he had once loved her.

And after a little he went away on foreign travel, and remained abroad for three years. When he returned, he found that Nora had degenerated into a withered little witch-faced creature, who was shunned by every one, and jeered at for the failure of her wicked spells, which had all come to nothing, though she had the Evil One himself to aid her; for such is the fate of all who deal in sorcery and devil's magic, especially with the help of Satan's chief instrument of witchcraft—the black cat.

But there is a certain herb of more power even than the cat's liver to produce love. Though what this herb is, only the adept knows and can reveal. The influence it exercises lasts, it is said, for twenty-one years, and then ceases and cannot be renewed.

A gentleman, now living, once ate of this herb, which was given to him by his wife's serving-maid, and in con-

sequence he was fated to love the girl for the specified time. Not being then able to endure his wife's presence, he sent her away from the house, and devoted himself exclusively to the servant. Nineteen years have now passed by, and the poor lady is still waiting patiently to the end of the twenty-one years, believing that the witch-spell will then cease, and that her husband's love will be hers once more. For already he has been inquiring after her and his children, and has been heard lamenting the madness that forced him to drive them from the house for the sake of the menial, who usurped his wife's place by means of some wicked sorcery which he had no power to resist.

THE KING OF THE CATS.

A most important personage in feline history is the King of the Cats. He may be in your house a common looking fellow enough, with no distinguishing mark of exalted rank about him, so that it is very difficult to verify his genuine claims to royalty. Therefore the best way is to cut off a tiny little bit of his ear. If he is really the royal personage, he will immediately speak out and declare who he is; and perhaps, at the same time, tell you some very disagreeable truths about yourself, not at all pleasant to have discussed by the house cat.

A man once, in a fit of passion, cut off the head of the domestic pussy, and threw it on the fire. On which the head exclaimed, in a fierce voice, "Go tell your wife that you have cut off the head of the King of the Cats; but wait!

I shall come back and be avenged for this insult," and the eyes of the cat glared at him horribly from the fire

And so it happened; for that day year, while the master of the house was playing with a pet kitten, it suddenly flew at his throat and bit him so severely that he died soon after.

A story is current also, that one night an old woman was sitting up very late spinning, when a knocking came to the door. "Who is there?" she asked. No answer; but still the knocking went on. "Who is there?" she asked a second time. No answer; and the knocking continued. "Who is there?" she asked the third time, in a very angry passion.

Then there came a small voice—"Ah, Judy, agrah, let me in, for I am cold and hungry; open the door, Judy, agrah, and let me sit by the fire, for the night is cold out here. Judy, agrah, let me in, let me in!"

The heart of Judy was touched, for she thought it was some small child that had lost its way, and she rose up from her spinning, and went and opened the door—when in walked a large black cat with a white breast, and two white kittens after her.

They all made over to the fire and began to warm and dry themselves, purring all the time very loudly; but Judy said never a word, only went on spinning.

Then the black cat spoke at last—"Judy, agrah, don't stay up so late again, for the fairies wanted to hold a council here to-night, and to have some supper, but you have prevented them; so they were very angry and de-

termined to kill you, and only for myself and my two daughters here you would be dead by this time. So take my advice, don't interfere with the fairy hours again, for the night is theirs, and they hate to look on the face of a mortal when they are out for pleasure or business. So I ran on to tell you, and now give me a drink of milk, for I must be off."

And after the milk was finished the cat stood up, and called her daughters to come away.

"Good night, Judy, agrah," she said. "You have been very civil to me, and I'll not forget it to you. Good night, good night."

With that the black cat and the two kittens whisked up the chimney; but Judy looking down saw something glittering on the hearth, and taking it up she found it was a piece of silver, more than she ever could make in a month by her spinning, and she was glad in her heart, and never again sat up so late to interfere with the fairy hours, but the black cat and her daughters came no more again to the house.

THE DEMON CAT.

The cat of the foregoing legend had evidently charming manners, and was well intentioned; but there are other cats of evil and wicked ways, that are, in fact, demons or witches, who assume the cat-form, in order to get easy entrance to a house, and spy over everything.

There was a woman in Connemara, the wife of a fisherman, and as he always had very good luck, she had plenty

of fish at all times stored away in the house ready for market. But to her great annoyance she found that a great cat used to come in at night and devour all the best and finest fish. So she kept a big stick by her and determined to watch.

One day, as she and a woman were spinning together, the house suddenly became quite dark ; and the door was burst open as if by the blast of the tempest, when in walked a huge black cat, who went straight up to the fire, then turned round and growled at them.

"Why, surely this is the devil!" said a young girl, who was by, sorting the fish.

"I'll teach you how to call me names," said the cat ; and, jumping at her, he scratched her arm till the blood came. "There now," he said, "you will be more civil another time when a gentleman comes to see you." And with that he walked over to the door and shut it close to prevent any of them going out, for the poor young girl, while crying loudly from fright and pain, had made a desperate rush to get away.

Just then a man was going by, and hearing the cries he pushed open the door and tried to get in, but the cat stood on the threshold and would let no one pass. On this, the man attacked him with his stick, and gave him a sound blow; the cat, however, was more than his match in the fight, for it flew at him and tore his face and hands so badly that the man at last took to his heels and ran away as fast as he could.

"Now it's time for my dinner," said the cat, going up to examine the fish that was laid out on the tables. "I hope

the fish is good to-day. Now don't disturb me, nor make a fuss; I can help myself." With that he jumped up and began to devour all the best fish, while he growled at the woman.

"Away, out of this, you wicked beast!" she cried, giving it a blow with the tongs that would have broken its back, only it was a devil; "out of this! No fish shall you have to-day."

But the cat only grinned at her, and went on tearing and spoiling and devouring the fish, evidently not a bit the worse for the blow. On this, both the women attacked it with sticks, and struck hard blows enough to kill it, on which the cat glared at them, and spit fire; then making a leap, it tore their hands and arms till the blood came, and the frightened women rushed shrieking from the house.

But presently the mistress returned, carrying with her a bottle of holy water; and looking in, she saw the cat still devouring the fish, and not minding. So she crept over quietly and threw the holy water on it without a word. No sooner was this done than a dense black smoke filled the place, through which nothing was seen but the two red eyes of the cat, burning like coals of fire. Then the smoke gradually cleared away, and she saw the body of the creature burning slowly till it became shrivelled and black like a cinder, and finally disappeared. And from that time the fish remained untouched and safe from harm, for the power of the Evil One was broken, and the demon cat was seen no more.

Cats are very revengeful, and one should be very careful

not to offend them. A lady was in the habit of feeding the cat from her own table at dinner, and no doubt giving it choice morsels; but one day there was a dinner party, and pussy was quite forgotten. So she sulked and plotted revenge; and that night, after the lady was in bed, the cat, who had hid herself in the room, sprang at the throat of her friend and mistress, and bit her so severely that in a week the lady died of virulent blood poisoning.

Yet it is singular that the blood of the black cat is esteemed of wonderful power when mixed with herbs, for charms; and also of great efficacy in potions for the cure of disease; but three drops of the blood are sufficient, and it is generally obtained by nipping off a small piece of the tail.

CAT NATURE.

The observation of cats is very remarkable, and also their intense curiosity. They examine everything in a house, and in a short time know all about it as well as the owner. They are never deceived by stuffed birds, or any such weak human delusions. They fathom it all at one glance, and then turn away with apathetic indifference, as if saying, in cat language—"We know all about it."

A favourite cat in a gentleman's house was rather fond of nocturnal rambles and late hours, perhaps copying his master, but no matter what his engagements were the cat always returned regularly next morning precisely at nine

o'clock, which was the breakfast hour, and *rang the house bell* at the hall door. This fact was stated to me on undoubted authority; and, in truth, there is nothing too wonderful to believe about the intellect of cats; no matter what strange things may be narrated of them, nothing should be held improbable or impossible to their intelligence.

But cats are decidedly malific; they are selfish, revengeful, treacherous, cunning, and generally dangerous. The evil spirit in them is easily aroused. It is an Irish superstition that if you are going a journey, and meet a cat, you should turn back. But the cat must meet you on the road, not simply be in the house; and it must look you full in the face. Then cross yourself and turn back; for a witch or a devil is in your path.

It is believed also that if a black cat is killed and a bean placed in the heart, and the animal afterwards buried, the beans that grow from that seed will confer extraordinary power; for if a man places one in his mouth, he will become invisible, and can go anywhere he likes without being seen.

Cats have truly something awful in them. According to the popular belief they know everything that is said, and can take various shapes through their demoniac power. A cat once lived in a farmer's family for many years, and understood both Irish and English perfectly. Then the family grew afraid of it, for they said it would certainly talk some day. So the farmer put it into a bag, determined to get rid of it on the mountains. But on the way he met a pack of hounds, and the dogs smelt at the bag and dragged it open, on which the cat jumped out; but the hounds

were on it in a moment, and tore the poor animal to pieces. However, before her death she had time to say to the farmer in very good Irish—"It is well for you that I must die to-day, for had I lived I meant to have killed you this very night." These were the last dying words of the cat uttered in her death agonies, before the face of many credible witnesses, so there can be no doubt on the matter.

Cats were special objects of mysterious dread to the ancient Irish. They believed that many of them were men and women metamorphosed into cats by demoniacal power. Cats also were the guardians of hidden treasure, and had often great battles among themselves on account of the hidden gold; when a demon, in the shape of the chief cat, led on the opposing forces on each side, and compelled all the cats in the district to take part in the conflict.

The Druidical or royal cat, the chief monarch of all the cats in Ireland, was endowed with human speech and faculties, and possessed great and singular privileges. "A slender black cat, wearing a chain of silver," so it is described.

There is a legend that a beautiful princess, a king's daughter, having gone down to bathe one day, was there enchanted by her wicked stepmother, who hated her; and by the spell of the enchantment she was doomed to be one year a cat, another a swan, and another an otter; but with the privilege of assuming her natural shape one day in each year, under certain conditions. It is to be regretted that we have no account as to the mode in which the Princess Faithlean exercised her brief enjoyment of human rights; for the narration would have had a mystic and deep psycho-

logical interest if the fair young victim had only retained during all her transformations the memory of each of her successive incarnations as the cat, the swan, and the otter.

This abnormal mode of existence, however, was not unusual amongst the Irish. Fionn himself had a wife who for seven years was alive by day and dead by night; and the Irish Princess Zeba, being enchanted by her wicked stepfather, the king of Munster, died and came to life again each alternate year.

All nations seem to have appreciated the mysterious and almost human qualities of cat nature; the profound cunning, the impertinent indifference, the intense selfishness, yet capable of the most hypocritical flatteries when some point has to be gained. There traits are not merely the product of brute instinct with unvarying action and results, but the manifestation of a calculating intellect, akin to the human. Then their grace and flexile beauty make them very attractive; while the motherly virtues of the matron cat are singularly interesting as a study of order, education, and training for the wilful little kitten, quite on the human lines of salutary discipline. Humboldt declared that he could spend a whole day with immense profit and advantage to himself as a philosopher, by merely watching a cat with her kittens, the profound wisdom of the mother and the incomparable grace of the children. For cats are thoroughly well-bred, born aristocrats; never abrupt, fussy, or obtrusive like the dog, but gentle, grave, and dignified in manner. Cats never run, they glide softly, and always with perfect and beautiful curves of motion; and they express their

affection, not violently, like the dog, but with the most graceful, caressing movements of the head.

Their intellect also is very remarkable, they easily acquire the meaning of certain words, and have a singular and exact knowledge of hours.

Mr. St. George Mivart, in his interesting and exhaustive work on cats, has devoted a whole chapter to the psychology of the cat; in which he shows that the race possesses evident mental qualities and peculiar intelligence, with also a decided and significant language of sounds and gestures to express the emotions of the cat mind. The highly reflective and observant nature of the cat is also admirably described in that very clever novel called "The Poison Tree," recently translated from the Bengalee. There the house-cat is drawn with the most lifelike touches, as she sits watching the noble and beautiful lady at work on her embroidery, while her little child is playing beside her with all the pretty toys scattered over the carpet: "The cat's disposition was grave: her face indicated much wisdom, and a heart devoid of fickleness. She evidently was thinking—'the condition of human creatures is frightful; their minds are ever given to sewing of canvas, playing with dolls, or some such silly employment; their thoughts are not turned to good works, such as providing suitable food for cats. What will become of them hereafter!' Then, seeing no means by which the disposition of mankind could be improved, the cat, heaving a sigh, slowly departs."

Seanchan the Bard and the King of the Cats.

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There is an amusing legend preserved in Ossianic tradition of the encounter between Seanchan, the celebrated chief poet of Ireland, and the King of all the Cats, who dwelt in a cave near Clonmacnoise.

In ancient Ireland the men of learning were esteemed beyond all other classes; all the great ollaves and professors and poets held the very highest social position, and took precedence of the nobles, and ranked next to royalty. The leading men amongst them lived luxuriously in the great Bardic House; and when they went abroad through the country they travelled with a train of minor bards, fifty or more, and were entertained free of cost by the kings and chiefs, who considered themselves highly honoured by the presence of so distinguished a company at their court. If the reception was splendid and costly, the praise of the entertainer was chanted by all the poets at the feast; but if any slight were offered, then the Ard-Filé poured forth his stinging satire in such bitter odes, that many declared they

would sooner die that incur the anger of the poets or be made the subject of their scathing satire.

All the learned men and professors, the ollaves of music, poetry, oratory, and of the arts and sciences generally, formed a great Bardic Association, who elected their own president, with the title of Chief Poet of all Ireland, and they also elected chief poets for each of the provinces. Learned women, likewise, and poetesses, were included in the Bardic Association, with distinct and recognized privileges, both as to revenue and costly apparel. Legal enactments even were made respecting the number of colours allowed to be worn in their mantles—the poet being allowed six colours, and the poetess five in her robe and mantle; the number of colours being a distinct recognition and visible sign of rank, and therefore very highly esteemed. But, in time, as a consequence of their many and great privileges, the pride and insolence of the learned class, the ollamhs, poets, and poetesses, became so insufferable, that even the kings trembled before them. This is shown in the Ossianic tale, from which we may gather that Seanchan the Bard, when entertained at the court of King Guaire, grew jealous of the attention paid to the nobles while he was present. So he sulked at the festival, and made himself eminently disagreeable, as will be seen by the following legend:—

When Seanchan, the renowned Bard, was made *Ard-Filé*, or Chief Poet of Ireland, Guaire, the king of Connaught, to do him honour, made a great feast for him and the whole Bardic Association. And all the professors went to the king's house, the great ollaves of poetry and history and

music, and of the arts and sciences; and the learned, aged females, Grug and Grag and Grangait; and all the chief poets and poetesses of Ireland, an amazing number. But Guaire the king entertained them all splendidly, so that the ancient pathway to his palace is still called "The Road of the Dishes."

And each day he asked, "How fares it with my noble guests?" But they were all discontented, and wanted things he could not get for them. So he was very sorrowful, and prayed to God to be delivered from "the learned men and women, a vexatious class."

Still the feast went on for three days and three nights. And they drank and made merry. And the whole Bardic Association entertained the nobles with the choicest music and professional accomplishments.

But Seanchan sulked and would neither eat nor drink, for he was jealous of the nobles of Connaught. And when he saw how much they consumed of the best meats and wine, he declared he would taste no food till they and their servants were all sent away out of the house.

And when Guaire asked him again, "How fares my noble guest, and this great and excellent people?" Seanchan answered, "I have never had worse days, nor worse nights, nor worse dinners in my life." And he ate nothing for three whole days.

Then the king was sorely grieved that the whole Bardic Association should be feasting and drinking while Seanchan, the chief poet of Erin, was fasting and weak. So he sent his favourite serving-man, a person of mild manners and cleanliness, to offer special dishes to the bard.

"Take them away," said Seanchan; "I'll have none of them."

"And why, oh, Royal Bard?" asked the servitor.

"Because thou art an uncomely youth," answered Seanchan. "Thy grandfather was chip-nailed—I have seen him; I shall eat no food from thy hands."

Then the king called a beautiful maiden to him, his foster daughter, and said, "Lady, bring thou this wheaten cake and this dish of salmon to the illustrious poet, and serve him thyself." So the maiden went.

But when Seanchan saw her he asked: "Who sent thee hither, and why hast thou brought me food?"

"My lord the king sent me, oh, Royal Bard," she answered, "because I am comely to look upon, and he bade me serve thee with food myself."

"Take it away," said Seanchan, "thou art an unseemly girl, I know of none more ugly. I have seen thy grandmother; she sat on a wall one day and pointed out the way with her hand to some travelling lepers. How could I touch thy food?" So the maiden went away in sorrow.

And then Guaire the king was indeed angry; and he exclaimed, "My malediction on the mouth that uttered that! May the kiss of a leper be on Seanchan's lips before he dies!"

Now there was a young serving-girl there, and she said to Seanchan, "There is a hen's egg in the place, my lord, may I bring it to thee, oh, Chief Bard?"

"It will suffice," said Seanchan; "bring it that I may eat."

But when she went to look for it, behold the egg was gone.

"Thou hast eaten it," said the bard, in wrath.

"Not so, my lord," she answered; "but the mice, the nimble race, have carried it away."

"Then I will satirize them in a poem," said Seanchan; and forthwith he chanted so bitter a satire against them that ten mice fell dead at once in his presence.

"'Tis well," said Seanchan; "but the cat is the one most to blame, for it was her duty to suppress the mice. Therefore I shall satirize the tribe of the cats, and their chief lord, Irusan, son of Arusan. For I know where he lives with his wife Spit-fire, and his daughter Sharp-tooth, with her brothers, the Purrer and the Growler. But I shall begin with Irusan himself, for he is king, and answerable for all the cats."

And he said—"Irusan, monster of claws, who strikes at the mouse, but lets it go; weakest of cats. The otter did well who bit off the tips of thy progenitor's ears, so that every cat since is jagged-eared. Let thy tail hang down; it is right, for the mouse jeers at thee."

Now Irusan heard the words in his cave, and he said to his daughter, Sharp-tooth: "Seanchan has satirized me, but I will be avenged."

"Nay, father," she said, "bring him here alive, that we may all take our revenge."

"I shall go then and bring him," said Irusan; "so send thy brothers after me."

Now when it was told to Seanchan that the King of the Cats was on his way to come and kill him, he was timorous, and besought Guaire and all the nobles to stand by and protect him. And before long a vibrating, impressive,

impetuous sound was heard, like a raging tempest of fire in full blaze. And when the cat appeared he seemed to them of the size of a bullock; and this was his appearance—rapacious, panting, jagged-eared, snub-nosed, sharp-toothed, nimble, angry, vindictive, glare-eyed, terrible, sharp-clawed. Such was his similitude. But he passed on amongst them, not minding till he came to Seanchan; and him he seized by the arm and jerked him up on his back, and made off the way he came before any one could touch him; for he had no other object in view but to get hold of the poet.

Now Seanchan, being in evil plight, had recourse to flattery. "Oh, Irusan," he exclaimed, "how truly splendid thou art, such running, such leaps, such strength, and such agility! But what evil have I done, oh, Irusan, son of Arusan? spare me, I entreat. I invoke the saints between thee and me, oh, great King of the Cats."

But not a bit did the cat let go his hold for all this fine talk, but went straight on to Clonmacnoise where there was a forge; and St. Kieran happened to be there standing at the door.

"What!" exclaimed the saint; "is that the Chief Bard of Erin on the back of a cat? Has Guaire's hospitality ended in this?" And he ran for a red-hot bar of iron that was in the furnace, and struck the cat on the side with it, so that the iron passed through him, and he fell down lifeless.

"Now my curse on the hand that gave that blow!" said the bard, when he got upon his feet.

"And wherefore?" asked St. Kieran.

"Because," answered Seanchan, "I would rather Irusan had killed me, and eaten me every bit, that so I might

bring disgrace on Guaire for the bad food he gave me; for it was all owing to his wretched dinners that I got into this plight."

And when all the other kings heard of Seanchan's misfortunes, they sent to beg he would visit their courts. But he would have neither kiss nor welcome from them, and went on his way to the bardic mansion, where the best of good living was always to be had. And ever after the kings were afraid to offend Seanchan.

So as long as he lived he had the chief place at the feasts, and all the nobles there were made to sit below him, and Seanchan was content. And in time he and Guaire were reconciled; and Seanchan and all the ollamhs, and the whole Bardic Association, were feasted by the king for thirty days in noble style, and had the choicest of viands and the best of French wines to drink, served in goblets of silver. And in return for his splendid hospitality the Bardic Association decreed, unanimously, a vote of thanks to the king. And they praised him in poems as "Guaire the Generous," by which name he was ever after known in history, for the words of the poet are immortal.

THE BARDS.

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THE Irish kings in ancient times kept up splendid hospitality at their respective courts, and never sat down to an entertainment, it was said, without a hundred nobles at least being present. Next in rank and superb living to the royal race came the learned men, the ollamhs and poets; they were placed next the king, and above the nobles at the festivals, and very gorgeous was the appearance of the Ard-Filé on these occasions, in his white robes clasped with golden brooches, and a circlet of gold upon his head; while by his side lay the golden harp, which he seized when the poetic frenzy came upon him, and swept the chords to songs of love, or in praise of immortal heroes. The queen alone had the privilege to ask the poet to recite at the royal banquets, and while he declaimed, no man dared to interrupt him by a single word.

A train of fifty minor bards always attended the chief poet, and they were all entertained free of cost wherever they visited, throughout Ireland, while the Ard-Filé was borne on men's shoulders to the palace of the king, and there presented with a rich robe, a chain, and a girdle of gold. Of one bard, it is recorded that the king gave him,

in addition, his horse and armour, fifty rings to his hand, one thousand ounces of pure gold, and his chess-board.

The game of chess is frequently referred to in the old bardic tales; and chess seems to have been a favourite pastime with the Irish from the most remote antiquity. The pieces must have been of great size, for it is narrated that the great Cuchullen killed a messenger who had told him a lie, by merely flinging a chessman at him, which pierced his brain. The royal chess-board was very costly and richly decorated. One is described in a manuscript of the twelfth century: "It was a board of silver and pure gold, and every angle was illuminated with precious stones. And there was a man-bag of woven brass wire." But the ancestors of the same king had in their hall a chess-board with the pieces formed of the *bones of their hereditary enemies.*

The dress of the bards added to their splendour, for the Brehon laws enacted that the value of the robes of the chief poet should be five milch cows, and that of the poetess three cows; the queen's robes being of the value of seven cows, including a diadem and golden veil, and a robe of scarlet silk, embroidered in divers colours. The scions of the royal house had also the right to seven colours in their mantle; while the poet was allowed six, and the poetess five —the number of colours being a sign of dignity and rank.

Learning was always highly esteemed in Ireland, and in ancient Erin the *literati* ranked next to the kings.

The great and wise *Ollamh-Fodla*, king of Ireland in Druidic times, built and endowed a college at Tara, near the royal palace, which was called *Mur-Ollamh*, "the Wall of the Learned." All the arts and sciences were represented

there by eminent professors, the great ollaves of music, history, poetry, and oratory; and they lived and feasted together, and formed the great Bardic Association, ruled over by their own president, styled the Ard-Filé, or chief poet of Ireland, from *Filidecht* (philosophy or the highest wisdom); for the poets, above all men, were required to be pure and free from all sin that could be a reproach to learning. From them was demanded—

"Purity of hand,
Purity of mouth,
Purity of learning,
Purity of marriage;"

and any ollamh that did not preserve these four purities, lost half his income and his dignity, the poet being esteemed not only the highest of all men for his learning and intellect, but also as being the true revealer of the supreme wisdom.

Music was sedulously taught and cultivated at the college of the ollamhs; for all the ancient life of Ireland moved to music.

The Brehons seated on a hill intoned the laws to the listening people; the Senachies chanted the genealogies of the kings; and the Poets recited the deeds of the heroes, or sang to their gold harps those exquisite airs that still enchant the world, and which have been wafted down along the centuries, an echo, according to tradition, of the soft, pathetic fairy music, that haunted the hills and glens of ancient Ireland.

The chief poet was required to know by heart four hundred poems, and the minor bards two hundred. And they were bound to recite any poem called for by the kings at the

festivals. On one occasion a recitation was demanded of the legend of the *Taine-bo-Cualgnia*, or The Great Cattle Raid, of which Maeve, queen of Connaught, was the heroine, but none of the bards knew it. This was felt to be a great disgrace, and Seanchan and the bards set forth to traverse Ireland in search of the story of the Taine, under *Geasa*, or a solemn oath, not to sleep twice in the same place till it was found.

At length it was revealed to them that only the dead Fergus-Roy knew the poem, and forthwith they proceeded to his grave, and fasted and prayed for three days, while they invoked him to appear. And on their invocation Fergus-Roy uprose in awful majesty, and stood in his grave clothes before them, and recited the Taine from beginning to end, to the circle of listening bards. Then, having finished, he descended again into the grave, and the earth closed over him.

During this expedition, Guaire the Generous took charge of all the wives and the poetesses of the Bardic Association, so as they should not trouble the bards while on their wanderings in search of the ballad of the Taine. Yet they do not seem to have been great feeders, these learned ladies; for it is related of one of them, Brigit the poetess, that although she ate only one hen's egg at a meal, yet she was called "Brigit of the great appetite."

It was on their return from the search for the Taine that the bards decreed a vote of thanks to Guaire the king.

In order to keep up the dignity of the great bardic clan, an income was paid by the State to each of the professors and poets according to his eminence; that of the chief poet

being estimated by antiquarians at about five thousand a year of our money, for the lofty and learned Bardic Association disdained commerce and toil. The Fileas lived only on inspiration and the hospitality of their royal and noble patrons, which they amply repaid by laudatory odes and sonnets. But, if due homage were denied them, they denounced the ungenerous and niggard defaulter in the most scathing and bitter satires. Of one chief it is recorded that he absolutely went mad and died in consequence of the malignant poems that were made on him by a clever satirical bard.

At last the Brehons found it necessary to take cognizance of this cruel and terrible implement of social torture, and enactments were framed against it, with strict regulations regarding the quality and justice of the satires poured out by the poets on those who had the courage to resist their exactions and resent their insolence. Finally, however, the ollamhs, poets, and poetesses became so intolerable, that the reigning king of Ireland about the seventh century made a great effort to extirpate the whole bardic race, but failed; they were too strong for him, though he succeeded in, at least, materially abridging their privileges, lessening their revenues, and reducing their numbers; and though they still continued to exist as the Bardic Association, yet they never afterwards regained the power and dignity which they once held in the land, before their pride and insolent contempt of all classes who were not numbered amongst the ollamhs and fileas, had aroused such violent animosity. The Brehon laws also decreed, as to the distraint of a poet, that his horsewhip be taken from him, "as a warning that he

is not to make use of it until he renders justice." Perhaps by the horsewhip was meant the wand or staff which the poets carried, made of wood, on which it is conjectured they may have inscribed their verses in the Ogham character.

The Brehons seem to have made the most minute regulations as to the life of the people, even concerning the domestic cats. In the *Senchas Mor* (The Great Antiquity), it is enacted that the cat is exempt from liability for eating the food which he finds in the kitchen, "owing to negligence in taking care of it." But if it were taken from the security of a vessel, then the cat is in fault, and he may safely be killed. The cat, also, is exempt from liability for injuring an idler in catching mice while mousing; but *half-fines* are due from him for the profitable worker he may injure, and the excitement of his mousing takes the other half. For the distraint of a dog, a stick was placed over his trough, in order that he be not fed. And there was a distress of two days for a black and white cat if descended from the great champion, which was taken from the ship of Breasal Breac, in which were white-breasted black cats; the same for the lapdog of a queen.

King Arthur and the Cat.

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While on the subject of cats, the curious and interesting legend of "King Arthur's Fight with the Great Cat" should not be passed over; for though not exactly Irish, yet it is at least Celtic, and belongs by affinity to our ancient race. It is taken from a prose romance of the fifteenth century, entitled, "Merlin; or, The Early Life of King Arthur," recently edited, from the unique Cambridge Manuscript, by Mr. Wheatly.

Merlin told the king that the people beyond the Lake of Lausanne greatly desired his help, "for there repaireth a devil that destroyeth the country. It is a cat so great and ugly that it is horrible to look on." For one time a fisher came to the lake with his nets, and he promised to give our Lord the first fish he took. It was a fish worth thirty shillings; and when he saw it so fair and great, he said to himself softly, "God shall not have this; but I will surely give him the next." Now the next was still better, and he said, "Our Lord may wait yet awhile; but the third shall be His without doubt." So he cast his net, but drew out only a little kitten, as black as any coal.

And when the fisher saw it he said he had need of it at home for rats and mice; and he nourished it and kept it in his house, till it strangled him and his wife and children. Then the cat fled to a high mountain, and destroyed and slew all that came in his way, and was great and terrible to behold.

When the king heard this he made ready and rode to the Lac de Lausanne, and found the country desolate and void of people, for neither man nor woman would inhabit the place for fear of the cat.

And the king was lodged a mile from the mountain, with Sir Gawvain and Merlin and others. And they clomb the mountain, Merlin leading the way. And when they were come up, Merlin said to the king, "Sir, in that rock liveth the cat;" and he showed him a great cave, large and deep, in the mountain.

"And how shall the cat come out?" said the king.

"That shall ye see hastily," quoth Merlin; "but look you, be ready to defend, for anon he will assail you."

"Then draw ye all back," said the king, "for I will prove his power."

And when they withdrew, Merlin whistled loud, and the cat leaped out of the cave, thinking it was some wild beast, for he was hungry and fasting; and he ran boldly to the king, who was ready with his spear, and thought to smite him through the body. But the fiend seized the spear in his mouth and broke it in twain.

Then the king drew his sword, holding his shield also before him. And as the cat leaped at his throat, he struck him so fiercely that the creature fell to the ground; but soon

was up again, and ran at the king so hard that his claws gripped through the hauberk to the flesh, and the red blood followed the claws.

Now the king was nigh falling to earth; but when he saw the red blood he was wonder-wrath, and with his sword in his right hand and his shield at his breast, he ran at the cat vigorously, who sat licking his claws, all wet with blood. But when he saw the king coming towards him, he leapt up to seize him by the throat, as before, and stuck his fore-feet so firmly in the shield that they stayed there; and the king smote him on the legs, so that he cut them off to the knees, and the cat fell to the ground.

Then the king ran at him with his sword; but the cat stood on his hind-legs and grinned with his teeth, and coveted the throat of the king, and the king tried to smite him on the head; but the cat strained his hinder feet and leaped at the king's breast, and fixed his teeth in the flesh, so that the blood streamed down from breast and shoulder.

Then the king struck him fiercely on the body, and the cat fell head downwards, but the feet stayed fixed in the hauberk. And the king smote them asunder, on which the cat fell to the ground, where she howled and brayed so loudly that it was heard through all the host, and she began to creep towards the cave; but the king stood between her and the cave, and when she tried to catch him with her teeth he struck her dead.

Then Merlin and the others ran to him and asked how it was with him.

"Well, blessed be our Lord!" said the king, "for I have slain this devil; but, verily, I never had such doubt of

myself, not even when I slew the giant on the mountain; therefore I thank the Lord."

(This was the great giant of St. Michael's Mount, who supped all the season on seven knave children chopped in a charger of white silver, with powder of precious spices, and goblets full plenteous of Portugal wine.)

"Sir," said the barons, "ye have great cause for thankfulness."

Then they looked on the feet that were left in the shield and in the hauberk, and said, "Such feet were never seen before!" And they took the shield and showed it to the host with great joy.

So the king let the shield be with the cat's feet; but the other feet he had laid in a coffin to be kept. And the mountain was called from that day "The Mountain of the Cat," and the name will never be changed while the world endureth.

Concerning Cows.

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The most singular legends of Ireland relate to bulls and cows, and there are hundreds of places all commencing with the word *Bo* (one of the most ancient words in the Irish language), which recall some mystic or mythical story of a cow, especially of a white heifer, which animal seems to have been an object of the greatest veneration from all antiquity.

In old times there arose one day a maiden from the sea, a beautiful Berooch, or mermaid, and all the people on the Western Coast of Erin gathered round her and wondered at her beauty. And the great chief of the land carried her home to his house, where she was treated like a queen.

And she was very gentle and wise, and after some time she acquired the language, and could talk to the people quite well in their own Irish tongue, to their great delight and wonder. Then she informed them that she had been sent to their country by a great spirit, to announce the arrival in Ireland of the three sacred cows—*Bo-Finn*, *Bo-Ruadh*, and *Bo-Dhu*—the white, the red, and the black cows, who were destined to fill the land with the most

splendid cattle, so that the people should never know want while the world lasted.

This was such good news that the people in their delight carried the sea-maiden from house to house in procession, in order that she might tell it herself to every one; and they crowned her with flowers, while the musicians went before her, singing to their harps.

After dwelling with them a little longer she asked to be taken back to the sea, for she had grown sad at being away so long from her own kindred. So, on May Eve, a great crowd accompanied her down to the strand, where she took leave of them, telling them that on that day year they should all assemble at the same place to await the arrival of the three cows. Then she plunged into the sea and was seen no more.

However, on that day year all the people of Ireland assembled on the shore to watch, as they had been directed by the beautiful sea-maiden; and all the high cliffs and all the rocks were covered with anxious spectators from the early dawn. Nor did they wait in vain. Exactly at noon the waves were stirred with a mighty commotion, and three cows rose up from the sea—a white, a red, and a black—all beautiful to behold, with sleek skins, large soft eyes, and curved horns, white as ivory. They stood upon the shore for a while, looking around them. Then each one went in a different direction, by three roads; the black went south, the red went north, and the milk-white heifer—the *Bo-Finn*—crossed the plain of Ireland to the very centre, where stood the King's palace. And every place she passed was named after her, and every well she drank at was called

Lough-na-Bo, or *Tober-Bo-Finn* (the well of the white cow), so her memory remains to this day.

In process of time the white heifer gave birth to twins, a male and female calf, and from them descended a great race, still existing in Ireland; after which the white cow disappeared into a great cave by the sea, the entrance to which no man knows. And there she remains, and will remain, in an enchanted sleep, until the true king of Eiré, the lord of Ireland, shall come to waken her; but the lake near the cave is still known as *Lough-na-Bo-banna* (the lake of the snow-white cow). Yet some say that it was the king's daughter was carried off by enchantment to the cave, in the form of a cow, and she will never regain her form until she sleeps on the summit of each of the three highest mountains in Ireland; but only the true king of Eiré can wake her from her sleep, and bring her to "the rock of the high place," whence she will be restored at last to her own beautiful form.

Another legend says that a red-haired woman struck the beautiful Bo-Finn with her staff, and smote her to death; and the roar which the white cow gave in dying was heard throughout the whole of Ireland, and all the people trembled. This is evidently an allegory. The beautiful Bo-Finn—the white cow—is Ireland herself; and the red-haired woman who smote her to death was Queen Elizabeth, "in whose time, after her cruel wars, the cry of the slaughtered people was heard all over the land, and went up to heaven for vengeance against the enemies of Ireland; and the kingdom was shaken as by an earthquake, by the roar of the oppressed against the tyrant."

The path of the white cow across Ireland is marked by small rude stone monuments, still existing. They show the exact spot where she rested each night and had her bed, and the adjoining lands have names connected with the tradition—as, "The plain of the Fenian cows;" "The hill of worship;" "The pool of the spotted ox," called after him because he always waited to drink till the white cow came, for they were much attached to each other.

There are also Druid stones at one resting-place, with Ogham marks on them. Some time ago an endeavour was made to remove and carry off the stones of one of the monuments; but the man who first put a spade in the ground was "struck," and remained bedridden seven years.

The plain of the death of the *Bo-banna* (the white cow), where she gave the roar that shook all Ireland, is called "the plain of lamentation." It never was tilled, and never will be tilled. The people hold it as a sacred spot, and until recently it was the custom to have dances there every Sunday. But these old usages are rapidly dying out; for though meant originally as mystic ceremonies, yet by degrees they degenerated to such licentious revelry that the wrath of the priesthood fell on them, and they were discontinued.

There is a holy well near "the plain of lamentation," called *Tobar-na-Bo* (the well of the white cow); and these ancient names, coming down the stream of time from the far-off Pagan era, attest the great antiquity of the legend of the coming to Ireland of the mystic and beautiful *Bo-Finn.*

There is another legend concerning the arrival of the three cows—the white, the red, and the black—which is said to be taken from the Book of Enoch.

Four cows sprang at once from the earth—two white, a red, and a black—and one of the four went over to the white cow and taught it a mystery. And it trembled and became a man, and this was the first man that appeared in Erin. And the man fashioned a ship and dwelt there with the cows while a deluge covered the earth. And when the waters ceased, the red and the black cows went their way, but the white remained.

The story is supposed by Bryant to be a literal rendering of some ancient hieroglyph, descriptive of the three races of mankind, and of the dispersion of the primal human family.

FAIRY WILES.

The fairies are very desirous to abduct handsome cows and carry them off to the fairy palace under the earth; and if a farmer happens to find one of his stock ailing or diseased, the belief is that the fairies have carried off the real good animal, and sent an old wizened witch to take the form of the farmer's cow. It is therefore to neutralize the fairy spells that the cattle are driven through the fire on St. John's Eve; and other devices are employed—a bunch of primroses is very effective tied on the tail, or a hot coal run down the cow's back to singe the hair.

One evening a boy was driving home his father's cows when a fairy blast arose in the form of a whirlwind of dust, on which the cows took fright, and one of them ran upon a fairy rath. The boy followed to turn her back, when he was met and stopped by an old witch-woman.

"Let her alone, Alanna," she cried, "she is on our ground now, and you can't take her away. So just run home and tell your father that on this day twelvemonth the cow will be restored to him, and bring a fine young calf along with her. But the fairies want her badly now, for our beautiful queen down there is fretting her life out for want of some milk that has the scent of the green grass in it and of the fresh upper air. Now don't fret, Alanna, but trust my words. There, take yon hazel stick and strike the cow boldly three times on the head, that so the way may be clear we have to travel."

With that the boy struck the animal as he was desired, for the old witch-woman was so nice and civil that he liked to oblige her, and immediately after she and the cow vanished away as if they had sunk into the earth.

However, the father minded the time, and when that day year came round he sent his son to the fairy rath to see if the witch had kept her promise, and there truly was the cow standing quite patiently, and a fine white calf by her side. So there were great rejoicings when he brought them home, for the fairies had kept their promise and behaved honourably, as indeed they always do when properly treated and trusted.

Not but that the fairies will do wicked things sometimes, and, above all, steal the milk when they get a chance, or skim the cream off the milk crocks.

A farmer had a fine cow that was the pride of his farm and gave splendid milk, but suddenly the animal seemed ailing and queer; for she gave no milk, but went every

morning and stood under the old hawthorn-tree quite quietly as if some one were milking her.

So the man watched the place at milking time, and as usual down the field came the cow and took up her position close under the old hawthorn. Then the farmer beheld the trunk of the tree open, and out of the cleft came a little witch-woman all in red, who milked the cow in a vessel she had with her, and then she retreated into the tree again.

Here was devil's work in earnest, so thought the farmer, and he hastened off for the greatest fairy doctor in the country. And when he came the cow was singed all along its back with a live coal; and then an incantation was said over it, but no one heard the words the fairy doctor uttered; after this he gave the animal a strong potion to drink, but no one knew the herbs of which it was made. However, the next day the cow was quite restored, and gave her milk as heretofore, and the spell was broken for ever and ever, after they had drawn a circle round the old hawthorn-tree with a red-hot piece of iron taken from the hearth; for neither witch nor fairy can pass a circle of fire.

THE DEAD HAND.

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WITCHCRAFT is sometimes practised by the people to produce butter in the churn, the most efficacious being to stir the milk round with the hand of a dead man, newly taken from the churchyard; but whoever is suspected of this practice is looked upon with great horror and dread by the neighbours.

A woman of the mainland got married to a fine young fellow of one of the islands. She was a tall, dark woman who seldom spoke, and kept herself very close and reserved from every one. But she minded her business; for she had always more butter to bring to market than any one else, and could therefore undersell the other farmers' wives. Then strange rumours got about concerning her, and the people began to whisper among themselves that something was wrong, and that there was witchcraft in it, especially as it was known that whenever she churned she went into an inner room off the kitchen, shut the door close, and would allow no one to enter. So they determined to watch and find out the secret, and one day a girl from the neighbourhood, when the woman was out, got in through a window

and hid herself under the bed, waiting there patiently till the churning began.

At last in came the woman, and having carefully closed the door began her work with the milk, churning in the usual way without any strange doings that might seem to have magic in them. But presently she stopped, and going over to a box unlocked it, and from this receptacle, to the girl's horror, she drew forth the hand of a dead man, with which she stirred the milk round and round several times, going down on her knees and muttering an incantation all the while.

Seven times she stirred the milk with the dead hand, and seven times she went round the churn on her knees muttering some strange charm. After this she rose up and began to gather the butter from the churn with the dead hand, filling a pail with as much butter as the milk of ten cows. When the pail was quite full she dipped the dead hand three times in the milk, then dried it and put it back again in the box.

The girl, as soon as she could get away unperceived, fled in horror from the room, and spread the news amongst the people. At once a crowd gathered round the house with angry cries and threats to break open the door to search for the dead hand.

At last the woman appeared calm and cold as usual, and told them they were taking a deal of trouble about nothing, for there was no dead hand in the house. However, the people rushed in and searched, but all they saw was a huge fire on the hearth, though the smell of burning flesh was distinctly perceptible, and by this they knew that she had

burnt the dead hand. Yet this did not save her from the vengeance of the neighbours. She was shunned by every one; no one would eat with her, or drink with her, or talk to her, and after a while she and her husband quitted the island and were never more heard of.

However, after she left and the butter was brought to the market, all the people had their fair and equal rights again, of which the wicked witchcraft of the woman had defrauded them for so long, and there was great rejoicing in the island over the fall and punishment of the wicked witch of the dead hand.

THE WICKED WIDOW.

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THE evil spells over milk and butter are generally practised by women, and arise from some feeling of malice or envy against a prosperous neighbour. But the spell will not work unless some portion of the milk is first given by consent. The people therefore are very reluctant to give away milk, unless to some friend that they could not suspect of evil. Tramps coming in to beg for a mug of milk should always be avoided, they may be witches in disguise; and even if milk is given, it must be drunk in the house, and not carried away out of it. In every case the person who enters must give a hand to the churn, and say, "God bless all here."

A young farmer, one of the fine handsome fellows of the West, named Hugh Connor, who was also well off and rich, took to wife a pretty young girl of the village called Mary, one of the Leydons, and there was no better girl in all the country round, and they were very comfortable and happy together. But Hugh Connor had been keeping company before his marriage with a young widow of the place, who had designs on him, and was filled with rage when Mary Leydon was selected for Connor's bride, in place of herself. Then a desire for vengeance rose up in her heart, and she

laid her plans accordingly. First she got a fairy woman to teach her some witch secrets and spells, and then by great pretence of love and affection for Mary Connor, she got frequent admission to the house, soothing and flattering the young wife; and on churning days she would especially make it a point to come in and offer a helping hand, and if the cakes were on the griddle, she would sit down to watch and turn them. But it so happened that always on these days the cakes were sure to be burned and spoiled, and the butter would not rise in the churn, or if any did come, it was sour and bad, and of no use for the market. But still the widow kept on visiting, and soothing, and flattering, till Mary Connor thought she was the very best friend to her in the whole wide world, though it was true that whenever the widow came to the house something evil happened. The best dish fell down of itself off the dresser and broke; or the rain got in through the roof, and Mary's new cashmere gown, a present that had come to her all the way from Dublin, was quite ruined and spoiled. But worse came, for the cow sickened, and a fine young brood of turkeys walked straight into the lake and got drowned. And still worst of all, the picture of the Blessed Virgin Mother, that was pinned up to the wall, fell down one day, and was blown into the fire and burned.

After this, what luck could be on the house? and Mary's heart sank within her, and she fairly broke down, and cried her very life out in a torrent of tears.

Now it so happened that an old woman with a blue cloak, and the hood of it over her head, a stranger, was passing by at the time, and she stepped in and asked Mary kindly what

ailed her. So Mary told her all her misfortunes, and how everything in the house seemed bewitched for evil.

"Now," said the stranger, "I see it all, for I am wise, and know the mysteries. Some one with the Evil Eye comes to your house. We must find out who it is."

Then Mary told her that the nearest friend she had was the widow, but she was so sweet and kind, no one could suspect her of harm.

"We'll see," said the stranger, "only do as I bid you, and have everything ready when she comes."

"She will be here soon," said Mary, "for it is churning day, and she always comes to help exactly at noon."

"Then I'll begin at once; and now close the door fast," said the stranger.

And with that she threw some herbs on the fire, so that a great smoke arose. Then she took all the plough irons that were about, and one of them she drove into the ground close beside the churn, and put a live coal beside it; and the other irons she heated red-hot in the fire, and still threw on more herbs to make a thick smoke, which Mary thought smelt like the incense in the church. Then with a hot iron rod from the fire, the strange woman made the sign of the cross on the threshold, and another over the hearth. After which a loud roaring was heard outside, and the widow rushed in crying out that a hot stick was running through her heart, and all her body was on fire. And then she dropped down on the floor in a fit, and her face became quite black, and her limbs worked in convulsions.

"Now," said the stranger, "you see who it is put the Evil Eye on all your house; but the spell has been broken at

last. Send for the men to carry her back to her own house, and never let that witch-woman cross your threshold again."

After this the stranger disappeared, and was seen no more in the village.

Now when all the neighbours heard the story, they would have no dealings with the widow. She was shunned and hated; and no respectable person would be seen talking to her, and she went by the name of the Evil Witch. So her life was very miserable, and not long after she died of sheer vexation and spite, all by herself alone, for no one would go near her; and the night of the wake no one went to offer a prayer, for they said the devil would be there in person to look after his own. And no one would walk with her coffin to the grave, for they said the devil was waiting at the churchyard gate for her; and they firmly believe to this day that her body was carried away on that night from the graveyard by the powers of darkness. But no one ventured to test the truth of the story by opening the coffin, so the weird legend remains still unsolved.

But as for Hugh Connor and the pretty Mary, they prospered after that in all things, and good luck and the blessing of God seemed to be evermore on them and their house, and their cattle, and their children. At the same time, Mary never omitted on churning days to put a red-hot horse-shoe under the churn, according as the stranger had told her, who she firmly believed was a good fairy in disguise, who came to help her in the time of her sore trouble and anxiety.

THE BUTTER MYSTERY.

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THERE were two brothers who had a small farm and dairy between them, and they were honest and industrious, and worked hard to get along, though they had barely enough, after all their labour, just to keep body and soul together.

One day while churning, the handle of the dash broke, and nothing being near to mend it, one of the brothers cut off a branch from an elder-tree that grew close to the house, and tied it to the dash for a handle. Then the churning went on, but, to their surprise, the butter gathered so thick that all the crocks in the house were soon full, and still there was more left. The same thing went on every churning day, so the brothers became rich, for they could fill the market with their butter, and still had more than enough for every buyer.

At last, being honest and true men, they began to fear that there was witchcraft in it, and that they were wronging their neighbours by abstracting their butter, and bringing it to their own churn in some strange way. So they both went off together to a great fairy doctor, and told him the whole story, and asked his advice.

"Foolish men," he said to them, "why did you come to

me? for now you have broken the spell, and you will never have your crocks filled with butter any more. Your good fortune has passed away, for know the truth now. You were not wronging your neighbours; all was fair and just that you did, but this is how it happened. Long ago, the fairies passing through your land had a dispute and fought a battle, and having no arms, they flung lumps of butter at each other, which got lodged in the branches of the elder-tree in great quantities, for it was just after May Eve, when butter is plenty. This is the butter you have had, for the elder-tree has a sacred power which preserved it until now, and it came down to you through the branch you cut for a handle to the dash. But the spell is broken now that you have uttered the mystery, and you will have no more butter from the elder-tree."

Then the brothers went away sorrowful, and never after did the butter come beyond the usual quantity. However, they had already made so much money that they were content. And they stocked their farm, and all things prospered with them, for they had dealt uprightly in the matter, and the blessing of the Lord was on them.

Concerning Birds.

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In all countries superstitions of good or evil are attached to certain birds. The raven, for instance, has a wide-world reputation as the harbinger of evil and ill-luck. The wild geese portend a severe winter; the robin is held sacred, for no one would think of harming a bird who bears on his breast the blessed mark of the blood of Christ; while the wren is hunted to death with intense and cruel hate on St. Stephen's Day.

THE MAGPIE.

There is no Irish name for the Magpie. It is generally called *Francagh*, a Frenchman, though no one knows why. Many queer tales are narrated of this bird, arising from its quaint ways, its adroit cunning and habits of petty larceny. Its influence is not considered evil, though to meet one alone in the morning when going a journey is an ill omen, but to meet more than one magpie betokens good fortune, according to the old rhyme which runs thus—

"One for Sorrow,
Two for Mirth,
Three for Marriage,
Four for a Birth."

THE WREN.

The wren is mortally hated by the Irish; for on one occasion, when the Irish troops were approaching to attack a portion of Cromwell's army, the wrens came and perched on the Irish drums, and by their tapping and noise aroused the English soldiers, who fell on the Irish troops and killed them all. So ever since the Irish hunt the wren on St. Stephen's Day, and teach their children to run it through with thorns and kill it whenever it can be caught. A dead wren was also tied to a pole and carried from house to house by boys, who demanded money; if nothing was given the wren was buried on the door-step, which was considered a great insult to the family and a degradation.

THE RAVEN AND WATER WAGTAIL.

If ravens come cawing about a house it is a sure sign of death, for the raven is Satan's own bird; so also is the water wagtail, yet beware of killing it, for it has three drops of the devil's blood in its little body, and ill-luck ever goes with it, and follows it.

THE CUCKOO AND ROBIN REDBREAST.

It is very unlucky to kill the cuckoo or break its eggs, for it brings fine weather; but most unlucky of all things is to kill the robin redbreast. The robin is God's own bird, sacred and holy, and held in the greatest veneration because

of the beautiful tradition current amongst the people, that it was the robin plucked out the sharpest thorn that was piercing Christ's brow on the cross; and in so doing the breast of the bird was dyed red with the Saviour's blood, and so has remained ever since a sacred and blessed sign to preserve the robin from harm and make it beloved of all men.

Concerning Living Creatures.

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THE CRICKET.

The crickets are believed to be enchanted. People do not like to express an exact opinion about them, so they are spoken of with great mystery and awe, and no one would venture to kill them for the whole world. But they are by no means evil; on the contrary, the presence of the cricket is considered lucky, and their singing keeps away the fairies at night, who are always anxious, in their selfish way, to have the whole hearth left clear for themselves, that they may sit round the last embers of the fire, and drink the cup of milk left for them by the farmer's wife, in peace and quietness. The crickets are supposed to be hundreds of years old, and their talk, could we understand it, would no doubt be most interesting and instructive.

THE BEETLE.

The beetle is not killed by the people for the following reason: they have a tradition that one day the chief priests

sent messengers in every direction to look for the Lord Jesus, and they came to a field where a man was reaping, and asked him—

"Did Jesus of Nazareth pass this way?"

"No," said the man, "I have not seen Him."

"But I know better," said a little clock running up, "for He was here to-day and rested, and has not long gone away."

"That is false," said a great big black beetle, coming forward; "He has not passed since yesterday, and you will never find Him on this road; try another."

So the people kill the clock because he tried to betray Christ; but they spare the beetle and will not touch him, because he saved the Lord on that day.

THE HARE.

Hares are considered unlucky, as the witches constantly assume their form in order to gain entrance to a field where they can bewitch the cattle. A man once fired at a hare he met in the early morning, and having wounded it, followed the track of the blood till it disappeared within a cabin. On entering he found Nancy Molony, the greatest witch in all the county, sitting by the fire, groaning and holding her side. And then the man knew that she had been out in the form of the hare, and he rejoiced over her discomfiture.

Still it is not lucky to kill a hare before sunrise, even when it crosses your path; but should it cross *three* times, then turn back, for danger is on the road before you.

A tailor one time returning home very late at night from a wake, or better, very early in the morning, saw a hare sitting on the path before him, and not inclined to run away. As he approached, with his stick raised to strike her, he distinctly heard a voice saying, "Don't kill it." However, he struck the hare three times, and each time heard the voice say, "Don't kill it." But the last blow knocked the poor hare quite dead; and immediately a great big weasel sat up, and began to spit at him. This greatly frightened the tailor who, however, grabbed the hare, and ran off as fast as he could. Seeing him look so pale and frightened, his wife asked the cause, on which he told her the whole story; and they both knew he had done wrong, and offended some powerful witch, who would be avenged. However, they dug a grave for the hare and buried it; for they were afraid to eat it, and thought that now perhaps the danger was over. But next day the man became suddenly speechless, and died off before the seventh day was over, without a word evermore passing his lips; and then all the neighbours knew that the witch-woman had taken her revenge.

THE WEASEL.

Weasels are spiteful and malignant, and old withered witches sometimes take this form. It is extremely unlucky to meet a weasel the first thing in the morning; still it would be hazardous to kill it, for it might be a witch and take revenge. Indeed one should be very cautious about killing a weasel at any time, for all the other weasels will

resent your audacity, and kill your chickens when an opportunity offers. The only remedy is to kill one chicken yourself, make the sign of the cross solemnly three times over it, then tie it to a stick hung up in the yard, and the weasels will have no more power for evil, nor the witches who take their form, at least during the year, if the stick is left standing; but the chicken may be eaten when the sun goes down.

A goose is killed on St. Michael's Day because the son of a king, being then at a feast, was choked by the bone of a goose; but was restored by St. Patrick. Hence the king ordered a goose to be sacrified every year on the anniversary of the day to commemorate the event, and in honour of St. Michael.

A fowl is killed on St. Martin's Day, and the blood sprinkled on the house. In Germany a black cock is substituted.

A crowing hen, a whistling girl, and a black cat, are considered most unlucky. Beware of them in a house.

If a cock comes on the threshold and crows, you may expect visitors.

To see three magpies on the left hand when on a journey is unlucky; but two on the right hand is a good omen.

If you hear the cuckoo on your right hand you will have luck all the year after.

Whoever kills a robin redbreast will never have good luck were they to live a thousand years.

A water wagtail near the house betokens bad news on its way to you.

If the first lamb of the season is born black, it foretells mourning garments for the family within the year.

It is very lucky for a hen and her chickens to stray into your house. Also it is good to meet a white lamb in the early morning with the sunlight on its face.

It is unlucky to meet a magpie, a cat, or a lame woman when going a journey. Or for a cock to meet a person in the doorway and crow before him—then the journey should be put off.

If one magpie comes chattering to your door it is a sign of death; but if two prosperity will follow. For a magpie to come to the door and look at you is a sure death-sign, and nothing can avert the doom.

A flight of rooks over an army betokens defeat; if over a house, or over people when driving or walking, death will follow.

It is very unlucky to ask a man on his way to fish where he is going. And many would turn back, knowing that it was an evil spell.

When a swarm of bees suddenly quits the hive it is a sign

that death is hovering near the house. But the evil may be averted by the powerful prayers and exorcism of the priest.

The shoe of a horse or of an ass nailed to the door-post will bring good luck; because these animals were in the stall when Christ was born, and are blessed for evermore. But the shoe must be found, not given, in order to bring luck.

In whatever quarter you are looking when you first hear the cuckoo in the season, you will be travelling in that direction before the year is over.

It was the privilege of the chief bards to wear mantles made of birds' plumage. A short cape flung on the shoulders made of mallards' necks and crests must have been very gorgeous in effect, glittering like jewels, when the torch-light played on the colours at the festivals.

The Properties of Herbs and their Use in Medicine.

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The Irish, according to the saying of a wise man of the race, are the last of the 305 great Celtic nations of antiquity spoken of by Josephus, the Jewish historian; and they alone preserve inviolate the ancient venerable language, minstrelsy, and Bardic traditions, with the strange and mystic secrets of herbs, through whose potent powers they can cure disease, cause love or hatred, discover the hidden mysteries of life and death, and dominate over the fairy wiles or the malific demons.

The ancient people used to divine future events, victory in wars, safety in a dangerous voyage, triumph of a projected undertaking, success in love, recovery from sickness, or the approach of death; all through the skilful use of herbs, the knowledge of which had come down to them through the earliest traditions of the human race. One of these herbs, called the *Fairy-geni plant*, was celebrated for its potent power of divination; but only the adepts knew the mystic manner of its preparation for use.

There was another herb of which a drink was made, called *the Bardic potion*, for the Bards alone had the secret of the herb, and of the proper mode of treatment by which its mystic power could be revealed. This potion they gave their infant children at their birth, for it had the singular property of endowing the recipient with a fairy sweetness of voice of the most rapturous and thrilling charm. And instances are recorded of men amongst the Celtic Bards, who, having drunk of this potion in early life, were ever after endowed with the sweet voice, like fairy music, that swayed the hearts of the hearers as they chose to love or war, joy or sadness, as if by magic influence, or lulled them into the sweet calm of sleep. Such, according to the Bardic legends, was the extraordinary power of voice possessed by the great Court Minstrel of Fionn Ma-Coul, who resided with the great chief at his palace of Almhuin, and always sat next him at the royal table.

The virtue of herbs is great, but they must be gathered at night, and laid in the hand of a dead man to hold. There are herbs that produce love, and herbs that produce sterility; but only the fairy doctor knows the secrets of their power, and he will reveal the knowledge to no man unless to an adept. The wise women learn the mystic powers from the fairies, but how they pay for the knowledge none dare to tell.

The fairy doctors are often seized with trembling while uttering a charm, and look round with a scared glance of terror, as if some awful presence were beside them. But the people have the most perfect faith in the herb-men and wise women, and the faith may often work the cure.

There are seven herbs of great value and power; they are ground ivy, vervain, eyebright, groundsel, foxglove, the bark of the elder-tree, and the young shoots of the hawthorn.

Nine balls of these mixed together may be taken, and afterwards a potion made of bog-water and salt, boiled in a vessel, with a piece of money and an elf-stone. The elf-stone is generally found near a rath; it has great virtues, but being once lifted up by the spade it must never again touch the earth, or all its virtue is gone. (This elf-stone is in reality only an ancient stone arrow-head.)

The *Mead Cailleath*, or wood anemone, is used as a plaister for wounds.

The hazel-tree has many virtues. It is sacred and powerful against devils' wiles, and has mysteries and secret properties known to the wise and the adepts. The ancient Irish believed that there were fountains at the head of the chief rivers of Ireland, over each of which grew nine hazel-trees that at certain times produced beautiful red nuts. These nuts fell on the surface of the water, and the salmon in the river came up and ate of them, which caused the red spots on the salmon. And whoever could catch and eat one of these salmon would be indued with the sublimest poetic intellect. Hence the phrase current amongst the people: "Had I the net of science;" "Had I eaten of the salmon of knowledge." And this supernatural knowledge came to the great Fionn through the touch of a salmon, and made him foreknow all events.

Of all herbs the yarrow is the best for cures and potions. It is even sewn up in clothes as a preventive of disease.

The *Liss-more*, or great herb, has also strong healing power, and is used as a charm.

There is an herb, also, or fairy grass, called the *Faud Shaughran*, or the "stray sod," and whoever treads the path it grows on is compelled by an irresistible impulse to travel on without stopping, all through the night, delirious and restless, over bog and mountain, through hedges and ditches, till wearied and bruised and cut, his garments torn, his hands bleeding, he finds himself in the morning twenty or thirty miles, perhaps, from his own home. And those who fall under this strange influence have all the time the sensation of flying and are utterly unable to pause or turn back or change their career. There is, however, another herb that can neutralize the effects of the *Faud Shaughran*, but only the initiated can utilize its mystic properties.

Another grass is the *Fair-Gortha*, or the "hunger-stricken sod," and if the hapless traveller accidently treads on this grass by the road-side, while passing on a journey, either by night or day, he becomes at once seized with the most extraordinary cravings of hunger and weakness, and unless timely relief is afforded he must certainly die.

When a child is sick a fairy woman is generally sent for, who makes a drink for the patient of those healing herbs of which she only has the knowledge. A childless woman

is considered to have the strongest power over the secrets of herbs, especially those used for the maladies of children.

There is an herb, grown on one of the western islands off the coast of Connemara, which is reported to have great and mystic power. But no one will venture to pronounce its name. If it is desired to know for certain whether one lying sick will recover, the nearest relative must go out and look for the herb just as the sun is rising. And while holding it in the hand, an ancient form of incantation must be said. If the herb remains fresh and green the patient will certainly recover; but if it wither in the hand while the words of the incantation are said over it, then the sick person is doomed. He will surely die.

It was from their great knowledge of the properties of herbs that the Tuatha-de-Dananns obtained the reputation of being sorcerers and necromancers. At the great battle of Moytura in Mayo, fought about three thousand years ago, Dianecht, the great, wise Druid physician to the army, prepared a bath of herbs and plants in the line of the battle, of such wonderful curative efficacy that the wounded who were plunged into it came out whole, it being a sovereign remedy for all diseases. But the king of the Tuatha having lost his hand in the combat, the bath had no power to heal him. So Dianecht made him a silver hand, and the monarch was ever after known in history as *Nuad Airgeat lamh* (Nuad of the silver hand).

All herbs pulled on May Day Eve have a sacred healing

power, if pulled in the name of the Holy Trinity; but if in the name of Satan, they work evil. Some herbs are malific if broken by the hand. So the plant is tied to a dog's foot, and when he runs it breaks, without a hand touching it, and may be used with safety.

A man pulled a certain herb on May Eve to cure his son who was sick to death. The boy recovered, but disappeared and was never heard of after, and the father died that day year. He had broken the fatal herb with the hand and so the doom fell on him.

Another man did the like, and gave the herb to his son to eat, who immediately began to bark like a dog, and so continued till he died.

The fatal herbs have signs known only to the fairy doctors, who should always be consulted before treating the sick in the family.

There are *seven* herbs that nothing natural or supernatural can injure; they are vervain, John's-wort, speedwell, eyebright, mallow, yarrow, and self-help. But they must be pulled at noon on a bright day, near the full of the moon, to have full power.

It is firmly believed that the herb-women who perform curses receive their knowledge from the fairies, who impart to them the mystical secrets of herbs and where to find them; but these secrets must not be revealed except on the death-bed, and then only to the eldest of the family. Many mysterious rites are practised in the making and the giving of potions; and the messenger who carries the draught to the sufferer must never look behind him nor

utter a word till he hands the medicine to the patient, who instantly swallows a cup of the mixture before other hands have touched it.

A celebrated doctor in the south was an old woman, who had lived seven years with the fairies. She performed wonderful cures, and only required a silver tenpence to be laid on her table for the advice given and for the miraculous herb potion.

A LOVE POTION.

Some of the country people have still a traditional remembrance of very powerful herbal remedies, and love potions are even now frequently in use. They are generally prepared by an old woman; but must be administered by the person who wishes to inspire the tender passion. At the same time, to give a love potion is considered a very awful act, as the result may be fatal, or at least full of danger.

A fine, handsome young man, of the best character and conduct, suddenly became wild and reckless, drunken and disorderly, from the effect, it was believed, of a love potion administered to him by a young girl who was passionately in love with him. When she saw the change produced in him by her act, she became moody and nervous, as if a constant terror were over her, and no one ever saw her smile again. Finally, she became half deranged, and after a few years of a strange, solitary life, she died of melancholy and despair. This was said to be "The Love-potion Curse."

LOVE DREAMS.

The girl who wishes to see her future husband must go out and gather certain herbs in the light of the full moon of the new year, repeating this charm—

"Moon, moon, tell unto me
When my true love I shall see?
What fine clothes am I to wear?
How many children shall I bear?
For if my love comes not to me
Dark and dismal my life will be."

Then the girl, cutting three pieces of clay from the sod with a black-hafted knife, carrys them home, ties them up in the left stocking with the right garter, places the parcel under her pillow, and dreams a true dream of the man she is to marry and of all her future fate.

TO CAUSE LOVE.

Ten leaves of the hemlock dried and powdered and mixed in food or drink will make the person you like to love you in return. Also keep a sprig of mint in your hand till the herb grows moist and warm, then take hold of the hand of the woman you love, and she will follow you as long as the two hands close over the herb. No invocation is necessary; but silence must be kept between the two parties for ten minutes, to give the charm time to work with due efficacy.

Medical Superstitions and Ancient Charms.

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The healing art in all the early stages of a nation's life, and amongst all primitive tribes, has been associated with religion. For the wonderful effects produced by certain herbs and modes of treatment were believed by the simple and unlettered people to be due to supernatural influences acting in a mystic and magical manner on the person afflicted.

The medicine men were therefore treated with the profoundest awe and respect. And the medicine women came in also for their share of veneration and often of superstitious dread; for their mysterious incantations were supposed to have been taught to them by fairies and the spirits of the mountain.

The Irish from the most remote antiquity were devoted to mystical medicine, and had a remarkable knowledge of cures and remedies for disease, obtained through the power and action of herbs on the human frame.

The physicians of the pagan era formed a branch of the Druid priesthood, and were treated with distinguished

honour. They had special places assigned to them at the royal banqueting table at Tara, and a certain revenue was secured to them that they might live honourably.

When in attendance on a patient the doctor was entitled by law to his diet, along with four of his pupils; but if he failed to cure from deficiency of skill, he was obliged to refund the fees and pay back all the expenses of his keep; a measure which no doubt greatly stimulated the serious attention of the learned ollamhs of healing to the case in hand.

So great indeed was the importance attached to the healing art in Ireland, that even prior to the Christian era, a building of the nature of an hospital was erected at Tara, near to the palace of the king. This was called "The House of Sorrow," and the sick and wounded were provided there with all necessary care.

On one occasion it is recorded that a great chief and prince out of Munster was brought to "The House of Sorrow" to be treated of wounds received in battle, but the attendant, through treachery, placed poison in the wounds, and then closed them so carefully that there was no external sign, though the groans of the wounded man were terrible to hear. Then the learned Fioneen was sent for, "the prophetic physician," as he was called, from his great skill in diagnosis; and when he arrived with three of his pupils at the hospital they found the chief lying prostrate, groaning in horrible agony.

"What groan is that?" asked the master, of the first pupil.

"It is from a poisoned barb," he answered.

"And what groan is that?" asked the master, of the second pupil.

"It is from a hidden reptile," he answered.

"And what groan is that?" asked Fioneen, of the third pupil.

"It is from a poisoned seed," he answered.

Then Fioneen set to work, and, having cauterized the wounds with red-hot irons, the poisonous bodies were extracted from beneath the skin, and the chief was healed.

In later times the Irish physicians were much celebrated for their learning, and numerous Irish medical manuscripts are in existence, both in Ireland and England, and are also scattered through the public libraries of the continent. They are chiefly written in Latin, with a commentary in Irish, and show a thorough knowledge on the part of the writers of the works of Hippocrates, Galen, Aristotle, and others as celebrated. For after the introduction of Christianity Latin was much cultivated in the Irish schools, and the priests and physicians not only wrote but could converse fluently in Latin, which language became the chief medium of communication between them and the learned men of the continent. But the most ancient mode of procedure amongst the Irish ollamhs and adepts was of a medico-religious character; consisting of herb cures, fairy cures, charms, invocations, and certain magical ceremonies. A number of these cures have been preserved traditionally by the people, and form a very interesting study of early medical superstitions, as they have been handed down through successive generations; for the profession of a physician was hereditary in certain families, and the accu-

mulated lore of centuries was transmitted carefully from father to son by this custom and usage.

Many of the ancient cures and charms are strange and mystic, and were accompanied by singular mysterious forms, which no doubt in many cases aided the cure; especially amongst a people so imaginative and susceptible to spiritual influences as the Irish. Others show a fervent faith and have a pathetic simplicity of expression, such as we find in "The Charm against Sorrow," and others, from the original Irish, of equal pathos and tenderness, to be quoted further on. The utterance evidently of a people of deep, almost sublime, faith in the Divine power of the Ruler of the world, and of the ever-present ministration of saints and angels to humanity.

Every act of the Irish peasant's life has always been connected with the belief in unseen spiritual agencies. The people live in an atmosphere of the supernatural, and nothing would induce them to slight an ancient form or break through a traditional usage. They believe that the result would be something awful; too terrible to be spoken of save in a whisper, should the customs of their forefathers be lightly interfered with.

In the Western Islands especially, the old superstitions that have come down from the ancient times are observed with the most solemn reverence, and the people, in fact, as to their habits and ideas, remain much the same as St. Patrick left them fourteen hundred years ago. The swift currents of thought that stir the great centres of civilization,

and impel the human intellect on its path of progress, have never reached them; all the waves of the centuries drift by their shores and leave them unchanged.

It is therefore in the islands and along the western coast that one gathers most of those strange legends, charms, mysteries, and world-old superstitions which have lingered longer in Ireland than in any other part of Europe.

Many of those included in the following selection were narrated by the peasants, either in Irish, or in the expressive Irish-English, which still retains enough of the ancient idiom to make the language impressively touching and picturesque. The ancient charms which have come down by tradition from a remote antiquity are peculiarly interesting from their deep human pathos, blended with the sublime trust in the Divine invisible power, so characteristic of the Irish temperament in all ages. A faith that believes implicitly, trusts devoutly, and hopes infinitely; when the soul in its sorrow turns to heaven for the aid which cannot be found on earth, or given by earthly hands. The following charms from the Irish express much of this mingled spirit of faith and hope:—

AGAINST SORROW.

A charm set by Mary for her Son, before the fair man and the turbulent woman laid Him in the grave.

The charm of Michael with the shield;
Of the palm-branch of Christ;
Of Bridget with her veil.

The charm which God set for Himself when the divinity within Him was darkened.

A charm to be said by the cross when the night is black and the soul is heavy with sorrow.

A charm to be said at sunrise, with the hands on the breast, when the eyes are red with weeping, and the madness of grief is strong.

A charm that has no words, only the silent prayer.

TO WIN LOVE.

"O Christ, by your five wounds, by the nine orders of angels, if this woman is ordained for me, let me hold her hand now, and breathe her breath. O my love, I set a charm to the top of your head; to the sole of your foot; to each side of your breast, that you may not leave me nor forsake me. As a foal after the mare, as a child after the mother, may you follow and stay with me till death comes to part us asunder. AMEN."

Another.

A charm of most desperate love, to be written with a raven's quill in the blood of the ring finger of the left hand.

"By the power that Christ brought from heaven, mayest thou love me, woman! As the sun follows its course, mayest thou follow me. As light to the eye, as bread to the hungry, as joy to the heart, may thy presence be with me, O woman that I love, till death comes to part us asunder."

FOR THE NIGHT-FIRE (THE FEVER).

"God save thee, Michael, archangel! God save thee!"

"What aileth thee, O man?"

"A headache and a sickness and a weakness of the heart. O Michael, archangel, canst thou cure me, O angel of the Lord?"

"May three things cure thee, O man. May the shadow of Christ fall on thee! May the garment of Christ cover thee! May the breath of Christ breathe on thee! And when I come again thou wilt be healed."

These words are said over the patient while his arms are lifted in the form of a cross, and water is sprinkled on his head.

FOR A PAIN IN THE SIDE.

"God save you, my three brothers, God save you! And how far have ye to go, my three brothers?"

"To the Mount of Olivet, to bring back gold for a cup to hold the tears of Christ."

"Go, then. Gather the gold; and may the tears of Christ fall on it, and thou wilt be cured, both body and soul."

These words must be said while a drink is given to the patient.

FOR THE MEASLES.

"'The child has the measles,' said John the Baptist.

"'The time is short till he is well,' said the Son of God.

"'When?' said John the Baptist.

"'Sunday morning, before sunrise,' said the Son of God."

This is to be repeated three times, kneeling at a cross, for three mornings before sunrise, and the child will be cured by the Sunday following.

FOR THE MAD FEVER.

Three stones must be charmed by the hands of a wise fairy doctor, and cast by his hand, saying as he does so—

"The first stone I cast is for the head in the mad fever; the second stone I cast is for the heart in the mad fever; the third stone I cast is for the back in the mad fever.

"In the name of the Trinity, let peace come. AMEN."

AGAINST ENEMIES.

Three things are of the Evil One—

An evil eye;
An evil tongue;
An evil mind.

Three things are of God; and these three are what Mary told to her Son, for she heard them in heaven—

The merciful word;
The singing word;
And the good word.

May the power of these three holy things be on all the men and women of Erin for evermore.

TO EXTRACT A THORN.

"The briar that spreads, the thorn that grows, the sharp spike that pierced the brow of Christ, give you power to draw this thorn from the flesh, or let it perish inside; in the name of the Trinity. AMEN."

TO CAUSE HATRED BETWEEN LOVERS.

Take a handful of clay from a new-made grave, and shake it between them, saying—

"Hate ye one another! May ye be as hateful to each other as sin to Christ, as bread eaten without blessing is to God."

FOR LOVE.

This is a charm I set for love; a woman's charm of love and desire; a charm of God that none can break—

"You for me, and I for thee, and for none else; your face to mine, and your head turned away from all others."

This is to be repeated three times secretly, over a drink given to the one beloved.

HOW TO HAVE MONEY ALWAYS.

Kill a black cock, and go to the meeting of three cross-roads where a murderer is buried. Throw the dead bird over your left shoulder then and there, after nightfall, in

the name of the devil, holding a piece of money in your hand all the while. And ever after, no matter what you spend, you will always find the same piece of money undiminished in your pocket.

FOR THE GREAT WORM.[1]

"I kill a hound. I kill a small hound. I kill a deceitful hound. I kill a worm, wherein there is terror; I kill all his wicked brood. Seven angels from Paradise will help me, that I may do valiantly, and give no more time to the worm to live than while I recite this prayer. AMEN."

FOR SORE EYES.

"Take away the pain, O Mary, mother, and scatter the mist from the eyes. For all power is given to the mother of Christ to give light to the eyes, and to drive the red mist back to the billows whence it came."

FOR PAINS IN THE BODY.

Rub the part affected with flax and tow, heated in the fire, repeating in Irish—

"In the name of a rough man and a mild woman, and of

[1] The ancient serpent-idol was called in Irish, "The Great Worm." St. Patrick destroyed it, and had it thrown into the sea. There are no serpents now to be found in Ireland, not even grass snakes or scorpions.

the Lamb of God, be healed from your pains and your sins. So be it. AMEN."

This custom refers to the tradition that one day the Lord Christ, being weary, asked leave to rest in a house, but was refused by the master of the house, a rough, rude man. Then the wife, being a mild woman, had pity on the wayfarer, and brought Him in to rest, and gave Him a cup of water to drink, and spake kindly to Him. After which the man was suddenly taken with severe pains, and seemed like to die in his agony.

On this Christ called for some flax and tow, and, breathing on it, placed it on the part affected, by which means the man was quite healed. And then the Lord Christ went His way, but not before the man had humbly asked pardon for his rudeness to a stranger.

The tradition of this cure has remained ever since, and a hot plaster of flax and tow is used by the peasantry invariably for all sudden pains, and found to be most efficacious as a cure.

AGAINST DROWNING.

"May Christ and His saints stand between you and harm.
Mary and her Son.
St. Patrick with his staff.
Martin with his mantle.
Bridget with her veil.
Michael with his shield.
And God over all with His strong right hand."

IN TIME OF BATTLE.

"O Mary, who had the victory over all women, give me victory now over my enemies, that they may fall to the ground, as wheat when it is mown."

FOR THE RED RASH.

"Who will heal me from the red, thirsty, shivering, cold disease that came from the foreigner, and kills people with its poisonous pain?" "The prayer of Mary to her Son, the prayer of Columbkill to God; these will heal thee. AMEN."

Another.

Say this oration three times over the patient, making the sign of the cross each time—

"Bridget, Patrick, Solomon, and the great Mary, banish this redness off you."

Then take butter, breathe on it quite close, and give it to the person to chafe himself therewith.

To ascertain if he will recover, put a handful of yarrow in his hand while he is sleeping; if it is withered in the morning, he will die; but if it remains fresh, the disease will leave him.

TO TAME A HORSE.

Whisper the Creed in his right ear on a Friday, and again in his left ear on a Wednesday. Do this weekly till he is tamed; for so he will be.

A VERY ANCIENT CHARM AGAINST WOUNDS OR POISONS.

"The poison of the serpent, the venom of the dog, the sharpness of the spear, doth not well in man. The blood of one dog, the blood of many dogs, the blood of the hound of Fliethas—these I invoke. It is not a wart to which my spittle is applied. I strike disease; I strike wounds. I strike the disease of the dog that bites, of the thorn that wounds, of the iron that strikes. I invoke the three daughters of Fliethas against the serpent. Benediction on this body to be healed; benediction on the spittle; benediction on him who casts out the disease. In the name of God. AMEN."

FOR A SORE BREAST.

To be said in Irish, while a piece of butter is rubbed over the breast:—

"O Son, see how swelled is the breast of the woman! O you that bore a Son, look at it yourself! O Mary! O King of Heaven, let this woman be healed! AMEN."

FOR A WOUND.

Close the wound tightly with the two fingers, and repeat these words slowly—

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Mary. The wound was red, the cut was deep, and the flesh was sore; but there will be no more blood, and no more pain, till the blessed Virgin Mary bears a child again."

FOR THE EVIL EYE.

This is a charm Mary gave to St. Bridget, and she wrote it down, and hid it in the hair of her head, without deceit—

"If a fairy, or a man, or a woman hath overlooked thee, there are three greater in heaven who will cast all evil from thee into the great and terrible sea. Pray to them, and to the seven angels of God, and they will watch over thee. AMEN."

FOR ST. ANTHONY'S FIRE.

"The fire of earth is hot, and the fire of hell is hotter; but the love of Mary is above all. Who will quench the fire? Who will heal the sick? May the fire of God consume the Evil One! AMEN."

HOW TO GO INVISIBLE.

Get a raven's heart, split it open with a black-hafted knife; make three cuts and place a black bean in each cut. Then

plant it, and when the beans sprout put one in your mouth, and say—

> "By virtue of Satan's heart,
> And by strength of my great art,
> I desire to be invisible."

And so it will be as long as the bean is kept in the mouth.

FOR PAINS.

"I kill the evil; I kill the worm in the flesh, the worm in the grass. I put a venomous charm in the murderous pain. The charm that was set by Peter and Paul; the charm that kills the worm in the flesh, in the tooth, in the body."

This oration to be said three times, while the patient is rubbed with butter on the place of the pain.

Another.

A happy mild charm, a charm which Christ discovered. The charm that kills the worm in the flesh.

"May Peter take, may Paul take, may Michael take, the pain away, the cruel pain that kills the back and the life, and darkens the eyes."

This oration written, and tied to a hare's foot, is always to be worn by the person afflicted, hung round the neck.

FOR A SPRAIN.

In the Western Isles the following charm is used for a sprain—

A strand of black wool is wound round and round the ankle, while the operator recites in a low voice—

"The Lord rade and the foal slade,
He lighted and He righted;
Set joint to joint and bone to bone,
And sinew unto sinew.
In the name of God and the Saints,
Of Mary and her Son,
Let this man be healed. AMEN."

A similar charm was used in Germany in the tenth century, according to Jacob Grimm.

TO CAUSE LOVE.

Golden butter on a new-made dish, such as Mary set before Christ. This to be given in the presence of a mill, of a stream, and the presence of a tree; the lover saying softly—

"O woman, loved by me, mayest thou give me thy heart, thy soul and body. AMEN."

FOR THE BITE OF A MAD DOG.

An oration which Colum-Cille set to a wound full of poison—

"Arise, O Carmac, O Clunane, through Christ be thou healed. By the hand of Christ be thou healed in blood, in marrow, and in bone. AMEN."

This oration to be pronounced over a man or a woman,

a horse or a cow, but never over a hog or a dog. The wound to be rubbed with butter during the oration.

FOR TOOTHACHE.

Go to a graveyard; kneel upon any grave; say three paters and three aves for the soul of the dead lying beneath. Then take a handful of grass from the grave, chew it well, casting forth each bite without swallowing any portion. After this process the sufferer, were he to live a hundred years, will never have toothache any more.

Another.

The patient must vow a vow to God, the Virgin, and the new moon, never to comb his hair on a Friday, in remembrance of relief should he be cured; and whenever or wherever he first sees the new moon, he must fall on his knees and say five prayers in gratitude for the cure, even if crossing a river at the time.

Another.

Carry in your pocket the two jaw-bones of a haddock; for ever since the miracle of the loaves and fishes, these bones are an infallible remedy against toothache, and the older they are the better, as nearer the time of the miracle.

Also this charm is to be sewn on the clothes—

> "As Peter sat on a marble stone,
> The Lord came to him all alone,

'Peter, Peter, what makes you shake?'
'O Lord and Master, it is the toothache.'
Then Christ said, 'Take these for My sake,
And never more you'll have toothache.'"

To avoid toothache never shave on a Sunday.

FOR FRECKLES.

Anoint a freckled face with the blood of a bull, or of a hare, and it will put away the freckles and make the skin fair and clear. Also the distilled water of walnuts is good.

FOR A BURN.

There is a pretty secret to cure a burn without a scar: "Take sheep's suet and the rind of the elder-tree, boil both together, and the ointment will cure a burn without leaving a mark."

FOR THE MEMORY.

The whitest of frankincense beaten fine, and drunk in white wine, wonderfully assisteth the memory, and is profitable for the stomach also.

FOR THE FALLING SICKNESS.

Take a hank of grey yarn, a lock of the patient's hair, some parings of his nails, and bury them deep in the earth,

repeating, in Irish, as a burial service, "Let the great sickness lie there for ever. By the power of Mary and the soul of Paul, let the great sickness lie buried in the clay, and never more rise out of the ground. AMEN."

If the patient, on awaking from sleep, calls out the name of the person who uttered these words, his recovery is certain.

If a person crosses over the patient while he is in the fit, or stands between him and the fire, then the sickness will cleave to him and depart from the other that was afflicted.

FOR CHIN-COUGH.

A griddle cake made of meal, to be given, not bought or made; but a cake *given* of love or of charity, not for begging; a cake given freely, with a prayer and a blessing; and from the breakfast of a man and his wife who had the same name before marriage; this is the cure.

The touch of a piebald horse. Even a piebald horse pawing before the door helps the cure.

The child to be passed seven times under and over an ass, while a red string is tied on the throat of the patient.

Nine hairs from the tail of a black cat, chopped up and soaked in water, which is then swallowed, and the cough will be relieved.

"One day when out snipe shooting," a gentleman writes,

"I saw a horrid-looking insect staring up at me. I called to a man close by, and asked him the name of it. He told me it was called the *Thordall*, and was reckoned a great cure for the *chin-cough;* for if any one got it safe in a bottle and kept it prisoner till it died, the disease would go away from the patient. It was just the time to try the cure, for my child was laid up with the epidemic. So I bottled my friend and daily examined the state of his health. It lasted for a fortnight, and at the end of that time the child had quite recovered, and the horrible-looking insect creature lay dead.

FOR RHEUMATISM.

The operator makes passes, like the mesmerist, over the member affected by the rheumatic pain, never touching the part, but moving his hand slowly over it at some distance, while he mutters a form of words in a low voice.

FOR A STYE ON THE EYELID.

Point a gooseberry-thorn at it nine times, saying, "Away, away, away!" and the stye will vanish presently and disappear.

TO CURE WARTS.

On meeting a funeral, take some of the clay from under the feet of the men who bear the coffin and apply it to the wart, wishing strongly at the same time that it may disappear; and so it will be.

FOR A STITCH IN THE SIDE.

Rub the part affected with unsalted butter, and make the sign of the cross seven times over the place.

FOR WEAK EYES.

A decoction of the flowers of daisies boiled down is an excellent wash, to be used constantly.

FOR WATER ON THE BRAIN.

Cover the head well with wool, then place oil-skin over, and the water will be drawn up out of the head. When the wool is quite saturated the brain will be free and the child cured.

FOR HIP DISEASE.

Take three green stones, gathered from a running brook, between midnight and morning, while no word is said. In silence it must be done. Then uncover the limb and rub each stone several times closely downwards from the hip to the toe, saying in Irish—

"Wear away, wear away,
There you shall not stay,
Cruel pain—away, away."

FOR THE MUMPS.

Wrap the child in a blanket, take it to the pigsty, rub the child's head to the back of a pig, and the mumps will leave it and pass from the child to the animal.

Another.

Take nine black stones gathered before sunrise, and bring the patient with a rope round his neck to a holy well—not speaking all the while. Then cast in three stones in the name of God, three in the name of Christ, and three in the name of Mary. Repeat this process for three mornings and the disease will be cured.

FOR EPILEPSY.

Take nine pieces of young elder twig; run a thread of silk of three strands through the pieces, each piece being an inch long. Tie this round the patient's neck next the skin. Should the thread break and the amulet fall, it must be buried deep in the earth and another amulet made like the first, for if once it touches the ground the charm is lost.

Another.

Take nine pieces of a dead man's skull, grind them to powder, and then mix with a decoction of wall rue. Give the patient a spoonful of this mixture every morning fasting, till the whole potion is swallowed. None must be left, or the dead man would come to look for the pieces of his skull.

FOR DEPRESSION OF HEART.

When a person becomes low and depressed and careless about everything, as if all vital strength and energy had gone, he is said to have got a fairy blast. And blast-water must be poured over him by the hands of a fairy doctor while saying, "In the name of the saint with the sword, who has strength before God and stands at His right hand." Great care being taken that no portion of the water is profaned. Whatever is left after the operation, must be poured on the fire.

FOR THE FAIRY DART.

Fairy darts are generally aimed at the fingers, causing the joints to swell and grow red and inflamed. An eminent fairy-woman made the cure of fairy darts her speciality, and she was sent for by all the country round, and was generally successful. But she had no power unless *asked* to make the cure, and she took no reward at the time; not till the patient was cured, and the dart extracted. The treatment included a great many prayers and much anointing with a salve, of which she only had the secret. Then she proceeded to extract the dart with great solemnity, working with a small instrument, on the point of which she finally produced the dart. This proved to be a bit of flax artfully laid under the skin by the malicious fairies, causing all the evil, and of course on seeing the flax no one could doubt the power of the operator, and the grateful patient paid his fee.

Various Superstitions and Cures.

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There is a book, a little book, and the house which has it will never be burned; the ship that holds it will never founder; the woman who keeps it in her hand will be safe in childbirth. But none except a fairy man knows the name of the book, and he will not reveal it for love or money; only on his death-bed will he tell the secret of the name to the one person he selects.

The adepts and fairy doctors keep their mysteries very secret, and it is not easy to discover the words of a charm, for the operator loses his power if the words are said without the proper preliminaries, or if said by a profane person without faith, for the operator should not have uttered the mystery in the hearing of one who would mock, or treat the matter lightly; therefore he is punished.

Some years ago an old man lived in Mayo who had great knowledge of charms, and of certain love philtres that no woman could resist. But before his death he enclosed the written charms in a strong iron box, with directions that no one was to dare to open it except the eldest son of an eldest son in a direct line from himself.

Some people pretend that they have read the charms; and

one of them has the strange power to make every one in the house begin to dance, and they can never cease dancing till another spell has been said over them.

But the guardian of the iron box is the only one who knows the magic secret of the spell, and he exacts a good price before he utters it, and so reveals or destroys the witchcraft of the dance.

The juice of deadly night-shade distilled, and given in a drink, will make the person who drinks believe whatever you will to tell him, and choose him to believe.

A bunch of mint tied round the wrist is a sure remedy for disorders of the stomach.

A sick person's bed must be placed north and south, not cross ways.

Nettles gathered in a churchyard and boiled down for a drink, have the power to cure dropsy.

The touch from the hand of a seventh son cures the bite of a mad dog. This is also an Italian superstition.

The hand of a dead man was a powerful incantation, but it was chiefly used by women. The most eminent fairy women always collected the mystic herbs for charms and cures by the light of a candle held by a dead man's hand at midnight or by the full moon.

When a woman first takes ill in her confinement, unlock instantly every press and drawer in the house, but when the

child is born, lock them all up again at once, for if care is not taken the fairies will get in and hide in the drawers and presses, to be ready to steal away the little mortal baby when they get the opportunity, and place some ugly, wizened changeling in the cradle beside the poor mother. Therefore every key should be turned, every lock made fast; and if the fairies are hidden inside, let them stay there until all danger is over for the baby by the proper precautions being taken, such as a red coal set under the cradle, and a branch of mountain ash tied over it, or of the alder-tree, according to the sex of the child, for both trees have mystic virtues, probably because of the ancient superstition that the first man was created from an alder-tree, and the first woman from the mountain ash.

The fairies, however, are sometimes successful in carrying off a baby, and the mother finds in the morning a poor weakly little sprite in the cradle in place of her own splendid child. But should the mortal infant happen to grow up ugly, the fairies send it back, for they love beauty above all things; and the fairy chiefs greatly desire a handsome mortal wife, so that a handsome girl must be well guarded, or they will carry her off. The children of such unions grow up beautiful and clever, but are also wild, reckless and extravagant. They are known at once by the beauty of their eyes and hair, and they have a magic fascination that no one can resist, and also a fairy gift of music and song.

If a person is bitten by a dog, the dog must be killed, whether mad or not, for it might become mad; then, so

also would the person who had been touched by the saliva of the animal.

If, by accident, you find the back tooth of a horse, carry it about with you as long as you live, and you will never want money; but it must be found by chance.

When a family has been carried off by fever, the house where they died may be again inhabited with safety if a certain number of sheep are driven in to sleep there for three nights.

An iron ring worn on the fourth finger was considered effective against rheumatism by the Irish peasantry from ancient times.

Paralysis is cured by stroking, but many forms and mystic incantations are also used during the process; and only certain persons have the power in the hands that can effect a cure by the magic of the stroke.

The seed of docks tied to the left arm of a woman will prevent her being barren.

A spoonful of *aqua vitæ* sweetened with sugar, and a little grated bread added, that it may not annoy the brain or the liver, will preserve from lethargy and apoplexy and all cold diseases.

The juice of carrots boiled down is admirable for purifying the blood.

Clippings of the hair and nails of a child tied up in a linen cloth and placed under the cradle will cure convulsions.

Tober Maire (Mary's well), near Dundalk, has a great reputation for cures. And thousands used to visit it on Lady Day for weak eyesight, and the lowness of heart. Nine times they must go round the well on their knees, always westward. Then drink a cup of the water, and not only are they cured of their ailment, but are as free from sin as the angels in heaven.

When children are pining away, they are supposed to be fairy-struck; and the juice of twelve leaves of foxglove may be given; also in cases of fever the same.

A bunch of mint tied round the wrist keeps off infection and disease.

There is a well near the Boyne where King James washed his sword after the battle, and ever since the water has power to cure the king's evil.

When a seventh son is born, if an earth-worm is put into the infant's hand and kept there till it dies, the child will have power to charm away all diseases.

The ancient arrowheads, called elf-stones by the people, are used as charms to guard the cattle.

It is not safe to take an unbaptized child in your arms without making the sign of the cross over it.

It is unlucky to give a coal of fire out of the house before the child is baptized. And a piece of iron should be sewn in the infant's clothes, and kept there till after the baptism.

Take a piece of bride-cake and pass it three times through a wedding-ring, then sleep on it, and you will see in a dream the face of your future spouse.

It is unlucky to accept a lock of hair, or a four-footed beast from a lover.

People ought to remember that egg-shells are favourite retreats of the fairies, therefore the judicious eater should always break the shell after use, to prevent the fairy sprite from taking up his lodgment therein.

Finvarra, the king of the fairies of the west, keeps up the most friendly relations with most of the best families of Galway, especially with the Kirwans of Castle Hacket, for Finvarra is a gentleman, every inch of him, and the Kirwans always leave out kegs of wine for him at night of the best Spanish wine. And in return it is said, the wine vaults at Castle Hacket are never empty, though the wine flows freely for all comers.

If a living worm is put into the hand of a child before he is baptized, and kept there till the worm is dead, that child will have power in after life to cure all diseases to which children are subject.

After being cured from a sickness, take an oath never to

comb the hair on a Friday, that so the memory of the grace received may remain by this sign till your death. Or whenever you first see the new moon, kneel down and say an ave and a pater; this also is for memory of grace done.

People born in the morning cannot see spirits or the fairy world; but those born at night have power over ghosts, and can see the spirits of the dead.

Unbaptised children are readily seized by the fairies. The best preventive is a little salt tied up in the child's dress when it is laid to sleep in the cradle.

If pursued at night by an evil spirit, or the ghost of one dead, and you hear footsteps behind you, try and reach a stream of running water, for if you can cross it, no devil or ghost will be able to follow you.

If a chair fall as a person rises, it is an unlucky omen.

The fortunate possessor of the four-leaved shamrock will have luck in gambling, luck in racing, and witchcraft will have no power over him. But he must always carry it about his person, and never give it away, or even show it to another.

A purse made from a weasel's skin will never want for money; but the purse must be found, not given or made.

If a man is ploughing, no one should cross the path of the horses.

It is unlucky to steal a plough, or to take anything by stealth from a smith's forge.

When yawning make the sign of the cross instantly over the mouth, or the evil spirit will make a rush down and take up his abode within you.

Never give away water before breakfast, nor milk while churning is going on.

A married woman should not walk upon graves, or her child will have a club-foot. If by accident she treads on a grave she must instantly kneel down, say a prayer, and make the sign of the cross on the sole of her shoe three times over.

Never take an infant in your arms, nor turn your head to look at it without saying, "God bless it." This keeps away the fatal influence of the Evil Eye.

If a bride steers a boat on the day of her marriage, the winds and the waves have no power over it, be the tempest ever so fierce or the stream ever so rapid.

Do not put out a light while people are at supper, or there will be one less at the table before the year is out.

Never give any salt or fire while churning is going on. To upset the salt is exceedingly unlucky and a bad omen; to avert evil gather up the salt and fling it over the right shoulder into the fire, with the left hand.

If you want a person to win at cards, stick a crooked pin in his coat.

The seventh son of a seventh son has power over all diseases, and can cure them by laying on of hands; and a son born after his father's death has power over fevers.

There is one hour in every day when whatever you wish will be granted, but no one knows what that hour is. It is all a chance if we come on it. There is also one hour in the day when ghost-seers can see spirits—but only one—at no other time have they the power, yet they never know the hour, the coming of it is a mystery.

In some parts of Ireland the people, it is said, on first seeing the new moon, fall on their knees and address her in a loud voice with the prayer: "O moon; leave us well as thou hast found us!"

It is unlucky to meet a cat, a dog, or a woman, when going out first in the morning; but unlucky above all is it to meet a woman with red hair the first thing in the morning when going on a journey, for her presence brings ill-luck and certain evil.

It is unlucky to pass under a hempen rope; the person who does so will die a violent death, or is fated to commit an evil act in after life, so it is decreed.

The cuttings of your hair should not be thrown where

birds can find them; for they will take them to build their nests, and then you will have headaches all the year after.

The cause of a club-foot is this—The mother stood on a cross in a churchyard before her child was born—so evil came.

To cure fever, place the patient on the sandy shore when the tide is coming in, and the retreating waves will carry away the disease and leave him well.

To make the skin beautiful, wash the face in May dew upon May morning just at sunrise.

If the palm of the hand itches you will be getting money; if the elbow, you will be changing beds; if the ear itches and is red and hot, some one is speaking ill of you.

If three drops of water are given to an infant before it is baptized, it will answer the first three questions put to it.

To know the name of the person you are destined to marry, put a snail on a plate of flour—cover it over and leave it all night; in the morning the initial letter of the name will be found traced on the flour by the snail.

If one desires to know if a sick person will recover, take nine smooth stones from the running water; fling them over the right shoulder, then lay them in a turf fire to remain untouched for one night. If the disease is to end fatally

the stones in the morning will emit a clear sound like a bell when struck together.

A white-thorn stick is a very unlucky companion on a journey; but a hazel switch brings good luck and has power over the devil.

A hen that crows is very unlucky and should be killed; very often the hen is stoned, for it is believed that she is bewitched by the fairies.

It is asserted that on Christmas morning the ass kneels down in adoration of Christ, and if a person can manage to touch the cross on the back of the animal at that particular moment the wish of his heart will be granted, whatever it may be.

When taking possession of a new house, every one should bring in some present, however trifling, but nothing should be taken away, and a prayer should be said in each corner of your bedroom, and some article of your clothing be deposited there at the same time.

TO FIND STOLEN GOODS.

Place two keys on a sieve, in the form of a cross. Two men hold the sieve, while a third makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the suspected party, and calls out his name loudly, three times over. If innocent, the keys

remain stationary; but if guilty, the keys revolve slowly round the sieve, and then there is no doubt as to who is the thief.

A PRAYER AGAINST THE PLAGUE.

"O Star of Heaven, beloved of the Lord, drive away the foul constellation that has slain the people with the wound of dreadful death. O Star of the Sea, save us from the poison-breath that kills, from the enemy that slays in the night. AMEN."

A BLESSING.

"O aged old woman of the grey locks, may eight hundred blessings twelve times over be on thee! Mayest thou be free from desolation, O woman of the aged frame! And may many tears fall on thy grave."

A CURE FOR CATTLE.

Take nine leaves of the male crowfoot, plucked on a Sunday night; bruise them on a stone that never was moved since the world began, and never can be moved. Mix with salt and spittle, and apply the plaster to the ear of the sick beast. Repeat this three times for a man, and twice for a horse.

A CHARM FOR SAFETY.

Pluck ten blades of yarrow, keep nine, and cast the tenth away for tithe to the spirits. Put the nine in your stocking, under the heel of the right foot, when going a journey, and the Evil One will have no power over you.

AN ELIXIR OF POTENCY.

(FROM A MANUSCRIPT OF DATE 1770.)

Two ounces of cochineal, one ounce of gentian root, two drachms of saffron, two drachms of snakeroot, two drachms of salt of wormwood, and the rind of ten oranges. The whole to be steeped in a quart of brandy, and kept for use.

FOR THE BITE OF A MAD DOG.

Six ounces of rue, four ounces of garlic, two ounces of Venice treacle, and two ounces of pewter filings. Boil for two hours in a close vessel, in two quarts of ale, and give a spoonful fasting each morning till the cure is effected The liquor is to be strained before use.

DREAMS.

Never tell your dreams fasting, and always tell them first to a woman called Mary.

To dream of a hearse with white plumes is a wedding; but to dream of a wedding is grief, and death will follow.

To dream of a woman kissing you is deceit; but of a man, friendship; and to dream of a horse is exceedingly lucky.

To dream of a priest is bad; even to dream of the devil is better. Remember, also, either a present or a purchase from a priest is unlucky.

FAIRY DOCTORS.

The fairy doctors are generally females. Old women, especially, are considered to have peculiar mystic and supernatural power. They cure chiefly by charms and incantations, transmitted by tradition through many generations; and by herbs, of which they have a surprising knowledge.

The fairies have an aversion to the sight of blood; and the peasants, therefore, have a great objection to being bled, lest "the good people" would be angry. Besides, they have much more faith in charms and incantations than in any dispensary doctor that ever practised amongst them.

CHARMS BY CRYSTALS.

The charms by crystals are of great antiquity in Ireland —a mode of divination, no doubt, brought from the East

by the early wandering tribes. Many of these stones have been found throughout the country, and are held in great veneration. They are generally globular, and appear to have been originally set in royal sceptres or sacred shrines. A very ancient crystal globe of this kind, with miraculous curative powers, is still to be seen at Currahmore, the seat of the Marquis of Waterford, and it is believed to have been brought from the Holy Land by one of the Le Poers, who had it as a gift from Godfrey de Bouillon. The ball is of rock crystal, a little larger than an orange, and is circled round the middle by a silver band. It is still constantly borrowed by the people to effect cures upon cattle suffering from murrain or other distempers. This is done by placing the ball in a running stream, through which the cattle are driven backwards and forwards many times.

The peasants affirm that the charm never fails in success, and the belief in its miraculous powers is so widespread that people from the most distant parts of Ireland send to Currahmore to borrow it. Even to this day the faith in its magic power continues unabated, and requests for the loan come from every quarter. The Marquis of Waterford leaves it in the care of his steward, and it is freely lent to all comers; but to the credit of the people it may be noted, that the magic crystal is always brought back to Currahmore with the most scrupulous care.[1]

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[1] Extract from a letter by the Marchioness of Waterford, on the Currahmore Crystal.

ALECTROMANTIA.

Should a person be bewitched by an evil neighbour, he must take two black cocks, lay a charm over the head of one and let it loose; but the other must be boiled down, feathers and all, and eaten. Then the malice of the neighbour will have no effect on him or his.

Ancient Egypt and Greece had likewise superstitions on the subject of sacrificing a cock. Even the last words of Socrates had reference to this subject. It is remarkable also that in the Christian legend it was a cock that testified indignantly by his crowing against Peter's treachery and cowardice, and aroused in him the remorse that was evidenced by his tears.

FAIRY POWER.

It is on Fridays that the fairies have the most power to work evil; therefore Friday is an unlucky day to begin work, or to go on a journey, or to have a wedding; for the spirits are then present everywhere, and hear and see everything that is going on, and will mar and spoil all they can, just out of malice and jealousy of the mortal race.

It is then they strike cattle with their elfin arrows, lame a horse, steal the milk, and carry off the handsome children, leaving an ugly changeling in exchange, who is soon known to be a fairy sprite by its voracious appetite, without any natural increase in growth.

This superstition makes the peasant-women often very

cruel towards weakly children; and the trial by fire is sometimes resorted to in order to test the nature of the child who is suspected of being a changeling. For this purpose a fairy woman is usually sent for, who makes a drink for the little patient of certain herbs of whose power she alone has the secret knowledge; and a childless woman is considered the best to make the potion. Should there be no improvement in the child after the treatment with herbs, then the witch-women sometimes resort to terrible measures to test the fairy nature of the sufferer.

A child who was suspected of being a changeling, because he was wasted and thin and always restless and fretful, was ordered by the witch-woman to be placed for three nights on a shovel outside the door from sunset to sunrise, during which time he was given foxglove to chew, and cold water was flung over him to banish the fire-devil. The screams of the child at night were frightful, calling on his mother to come and take him in; but the fairy doctor told the mother not to fear; the fairies were certainly tormenting him, but by the third night their power would cease, and the child would be quite restored. However, on the third night the poor little child lay dead.

Omens and Superstitions.

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Auguries and prophecies of coming fate may also be obtained from the flight of birds, the motion of the winds, from sneezing, dreams, lots, and the signs from a verse of the Psalter or Gospels. The peasantry attach great importance to the first verses of St. John's Gospel, and maintain that when the cock crows in the morning he is repeating these verses (from the 1st to the 14th), and if we understood the language of animals and birds, we could often hear them quoting these same verses.

A charm against sickness is an amulet worn round the neck, enclosing a piece of paper, on which is written the first three verses of St. John's Gospel.

OMENS THAT FORBODE EVIL.

To stick a penknife in the mast of a boat when sailing is most unlucky.

To meet a man with red hair, or a woman with a red petticoat, the first thing in the morning.

To kill the robin redbreast.

To pass a churn and not give a helping hand.

To meet a funeral and not go back three steps with it.

To have a hare cross your path before sunrise.

To take away a lighted sod on May days or churning days; for fire is the most sacred of all things, and you take away the blessing from the house along with it.

The Irish are very susceptible to omens. They say, "Beware of a childless woman who looks fixedly at your child."

Fire is the holiest of all things. Walk three times round a fire on St. John's Eve, and you will be safe from disease for all that year.

It is particularly unlucky to meet a red-haired man the first thing in the morning. There is a tradition that Judas Iscariot had red hair, and from this the superstitious dread of the evil interference of a red-haired man may have originated.

Never begin work on a Friday.

Never remove from a house or leave a situation on Saturday.

Never begin to make a dress on Saturday, or the wearer will die within the year.

Never mend a rent in a dress while on, or evil and malicious reports will be spread about you.

Some days are unlucky to certain families—as Tuesday to the Tudors. Henry VIII., Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth all died upon a Tuesday.

To throw a slipper after a party going a journey is lucky. Also to breakfast by candle-light on Christmas morning.

It is fatal at a marriage to tie a knot in a red handkerchief, and only an enemy would do it. To break the spell the handkerchief should be burned.

The first days of the year and of the week are the luckiest. Never begin a journey on a Friday or Saturday, nor move from your residence, nor change a situation. Never cut out a dress or begin to make it on a Friday, nor fix a marriage, for of all days the fairies have the most malific power on a Friday. They are present then, and hear all that is said, therefore beware of speaking ill of them, for they will work some evil if offended.

Never pay away money on the first Monday of the year, or you will lose your luck in gaining money all the year after.

Presents may be given on New Year's Day, but no money should be paid away.

Those who marry in autumn will die in spring.

The yew-tree, the ash, and the elder-tree were sacred. The willow has a mystery in it of sound. The harp of King Brian-Boru was made of willow wood.

When a servant leaves her place, if her mistress gives her a piece of bread let her put by some of it carefully, for as long as she has it good luck will follow her.

TO ATTRACT BEES.

Gather foxglove, raspberry leaves, wild marjorum, mint, camomile, and valerian; mix them with butter made on May Day, and let the herbs also be gathered on May Day. Boil them all together with honey, then rub the vessel into which the bees should gather, both inside and out, with the mixture; place it in the middle of a tree, and the bees will soon come. Foxglove or "fairy fingers" is called "the great herb" from its wonderful properties.

Superstitions of the Islands.

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CONCERNING THE DEAD.

It is ill luck when going with a funeral to meet a man on a white horse. No matter how high the rank of the rider may be, the people must seize the reins and force him to turn back and join the procession at least for a few yards.

The three most powerful divinations are by fire, by water, and by clay. These are the three great powers—the power that ascends, which is fire; the power that falls, which is water; and the power that lies level on the earth, and has the mystery of the dead, which is clay.

If a short cut should be taken while carrying a corpse to the grave the dead will be disturbed in the coffin, for it is a slight and an insult to the corpse.

When a death was expected it was usual to have a good deal of bread ready baked in the house in order that the evil spirits might be employed eating it, and so let the soul of the dying depart in peace. Twelve candles stuck in clay should also be placed round the dying.

If two funerals meet at the same churchyard, the last corpse that enters will have to supply the dead with water till the next corpse arrives.

Never take a child in your arms after being at a wake where a corpse was laid out unless you first dip your hands in holy water.

The moment the soul leaves the body the evil spirits try to seize it, but the guardian angel fights against them, and those around must pray earnestly that the angel may conquer. After death the body must not be disturbed, nor should the funeral chant be raised for one hour.

There are many superstitions prevalent in the Western Islands which are implicitly believed and acted on. Fishermen when going to sea must always enter the boat by the right side, no matter how inconvenient.

A coal of fire thrown after the fisherman brings him good fortune.

A sick person must not be visited on a Friday, nor by any person who has just quitted a wake and looked upon the dead. The hair and nails of a sick person must not be cut till after recovery.

If a corpse falls to the ground the most fatal events will happen to the family.

The lid must not be nailed on the coffin of a new-born child, or the mother that bore it will never have another.

THE COASTGUARD'S FATE.

One day a coastguard man was out in his boat with some of the islanders when a terrible storm arose with thunder and lightning. The poor people fell on their knees and prayed devoutly, but the man laughed at them, called them fools and cowards, and said he also could make lightning and thunder as well as the God they were praying to. So he immediately prepared a small cannon he had on board, and set a match to the powder and fired it off. But before the echo died away a stream of lightning passed over him, and he fell dead in the boat a blackened corpse—a dreadful sign of the vengeance of heaven on his blasphemous daring.

RELICS.

If a false oath is taken upon a relic the vengeance of God falls upon the swearer, and the doom that few can bear and live rests upon him and upon all his descendants even to the seventh generation. They are shunned by the people, and looked upon as unlucky and accursed. There are some living even now from whom the curse of the past is not lifted, because the seventh generation has not yet passed by.

LEGENDS OF THE SAINTS.

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St. Patrick.

Many saints in old time used to come and take up their abode on these wild desolate islands for the rest and sanctity of solitude, and innumerable evidences of their presence still remain in the ancient ruins of the so-called cells or churches built in the rudest form, but always placed in a picturesque locality beside a well, which ever since has been held sacred, and no woman is allowed to wash her feet in the water.

In one of these islands is a stone bed called "The Bed of the Holy Ghost," and many people go from the mainland to lie a night in this bed, though the sea is always rough and dangerous, believing that it heals all diseases, and it brings good luck to all, and to women the blessing of children.

If the lark sings on St. Bridget's Day it is a good omen, and a sign of fine weather. And whoever hears it the first thing in the morning will have good luck in all he does for that whole day. St. Bridget was granted by the Lord to have every second Sunday fine so that she might preach to the converts that came to her.

Then St. Patrick greatly desired that his day should also be fine so that the people might gather together in remembrance of him, and this also was granted. So from that time forth the Saints' Day, the 17th of March, is always fine, for so it was decreed from the ancient times when he was upon earth.

On St. Patrick's Day it is the usage in the islands to affix large crosses made of straw and flowers on the door-posts, and a black cock is sacrificed in honour of the saint, though no one can tell why it is considered necessary that blood should be spilt, except that the idea of sacrifice is found in all religions and rituals of worship. At first the object most loved or most prized was sacrificed—a child, or a costly jewel. Then the human sacrifice began to be replaced by the offering of an animal, who was made the medium of expiation. And the god was satisfied so that blood was spilled to purify from sin.

It is remarkable that relics of this ancient ritual of sacrifice can still be found even in the enlightened households of this advanced nineteenth century. An ox is still slaughtered at Christmas, though Baal is forgotten; and a lamb is sacrificed at Easter, as the Druids offered the firstlings of the flock to the Sun-god; while a goose is slain on St. Michael's Day as a burnt-offering to the saint.

THE WELL OF THE BOOK.

When St. Patrick was one time amongst the Pagan Irish they grew very fierce and seemed eager to kill him. Then,

his life being in great danger, he kneeled down before them and prayed to God for help and for the conversion of their souls. And the fervour of the prayer was so great that as the saint rose up the mark of his knees was left deep on the stone, and when the people saw the miracle they believed.

Now when he came to the next village the people said if he performed some wonder for them they also would believe and pray to his God. So St. Patrick drew a great circle on the ground and bade them stand outside it; and then he prayed, and lo! the water rushed up from the earth, and a well pure and bright as crystal filled the circle. And the people believed and were baptized.

The well can be seen to this day, and is called *Tober-na-Lauer* (The Well of the Book), because St. Patrick placed his own prayer-book in the centre of the circle before the water rose.

ST. PATRICK AND THE SERPENT.

There is a lake in one of the Galtee mountains where there is a great serpent chained to a rock, and he may be heard constantly crying out, "O Patrick, is the *Luan*, or Monday, long from us?" For when St. Patrick cast this serpent in the lake he bade him be chained to the rock till *La-an-Luan* (The Day of Judgment). But the serpent mistook the word, and thought the saint meant *Luan*, Monday.

So he still expects to be freed from one Monday to another, and the clanking of his chains on that day is awful to hear as he strives to break them and get free.

In another lake there is a huge-winged creature, it is said, which escaped the power of St. Patrick, and when he gambols in the water such storms arise that no boat can withstand the tumult of the waves.

ST. PATRICK AND THE PRINCESSES.

One day the two daughters of the King of Meath, named Ethna and Fedalma, went down to the river to bathe, and there they beheld St. Patrick and his band of converts all draped in white robes, for they were celebrating morning prayers. And the princesses seeing strange men in white garments thought they were of the race of the male fairies, the *Daine-Sidhe.* And they questioned them. Then St. Patrick expounded the truth to them, and the maidens asked him many questions: "Who is your God? Is He handsome? Are His daughters as handsome as we are? Is He rich? Is He young or aged? Is He to die, or does He live for ever?"

Now St. Patrick having satisfied them on all these points the maidens, Ethna and Fedalma, were baptized, and became zealous workers for the Christian cause.

THE POISON CUP.

St. Patrick went on to Tara, and there he lit the Paschal fire and celebrated the Easter mysteries. But the Druids were wroth, for it was against their ordinances for any fire

to be lit until the chief Druid himself had kindled the sacred fire. . Therefore they sought to poison St. Patrick, and a cupful of poison was given him by one of the Druids; but the danger was revealed to him, and thereupon he pronounced certain words over the liquor, and whoever pronounceth these words over poison shall receive no injury from it. He also then composed the prayer, "In nomine Dei Patris," and recited it over the cup of poison.

The number of companions with whom St. Patrick travelled through the country was seven score and ten, and before his time only three classes of persons were allowed to speak in public in Erin—the chronicler, to relate events; the poet, to eulogize and satirize; and the Brehon, to pass judgment according to the law. But after St. Patrick's arrival every utterance of the three professions was subject to "the men of the white language"—that is, the Gospel—and only such utterances were allowed as did not clash with the Gospel.

DIVINATION.

In ancient Pagan times in Ireland the poets were supposed to possess the gift of prophecy, and by certain means could throw themselves into a state in which they had lucid vision of coming events. This state, called *Imbas for Osna*, was produced by incantations and the offering of the flesh of a red pig, a dog, or a cat to their idols. Then the poet, laying the two palms of his hands on his two cheeks, lay

down and slept; his idol gods being beside him. And when he awoke he could see all things and foretell all things. He could make verses with the ends of his fingers, and repeat the same without studying, and in this way proved his right to be chief poet at the court of the king. Also he laid his staff upon the head of a person, and thus he found out his name, and the name of his father and mother, and all unknown things that were proposed to him. And this prophetic power was also obtained by *Imbas for Osna*, though a different kind of offering was made to the idol.

But Patrick abolished these practices, and declared that whoever used them should enjoy neither heaven nor earth; and he substituted for them the *Corus Cerda* (the Law of Poetry), in which no offerings were made to demons; for the profession of the poet, he said, was pure, and should not be subject to the power of the devil. He left to the poets, however, the gift of extemporaneous recital, because it was acquired through great knowledge and diligent study, but all other rites he strictly forbade to the poets of Erin.

THE BLIND POET.

As a proof of the magnetic, lucid vision obtained by the great ollamhs of poetry, it is recorded of the blind poet, Louad Dall, that his attendants having brought him the skull of an animal found upon the strand, they asked him to declare its history. And thereupon placing the end of his wand upon the skull, he beheld with the inner vision, and said—

"The tempestuous waters have destroyed Breccan, and this is the skull of his lapdog; and but little of greatness now remains, for Breccan and his people have perished in the waves."

And this was "divination by the staff"—a power possessed only by the chief poets, and by none else.

THE STORY OF BRECCAN.

The story of Breccan is related in Cormac's Glossary. He was a merchant who traded between Ireland and Scotland with fifty corracles. Now there was a great whirlpool at Rathlin Island caused by the meeting of the seas, and they formed a caldron vast enough to swallow all Ireland. And it happened on a time that Breccan and all his corracles were lost and engulfed in this caldron. Not a man was left to tell the tale of how or where they had perished. Thus it was that the skull of a small animal being discovered on the beach, it was brought to the blind poet, who laying his staff on it obtained the inner vision by which he revealed the fate of Breccan and his fifty corracles.

BARDIC PRIVILEGES.

Now St. Patrick left the poets all their rights of divination by wisdom, and all their ancient rights over story-telling with the music of the harp, three hundred and fifty stories being allowed to the chief poet. He also secured just judgments for their professional rights; so that if land was

mentioned in their songs as having been walled and trenched by them, that was considered to be sufficient legal evidence of title to the soil.

But what they received of St. Patrick was better, he affirmed, than all the evil rites to devils which they had abandoned; along with the profane practice of magic by the two palms, called *Imbas for Osna*, by which lucid vision and the spirit of prophecy was supposed to come on them after invocations to idols and demons—all which evil practices St. Patrick abolished, but left to the poets the skilled hand in music and the fluent tongue in recitation; for which none can equal the Bards of Ireland throughout all the world.

The ogham writing on the poet's staff is mentioned in very old manuscripts as in use in the Pagan period, before St. Patrick's time, though no specimen of ogham writing has yet been found of earlier date than the Christian era.

St. Patrick introduced Latin and the Latin letters, which superseded ogham. And after his time Latin was taught very generally in the Irish schools.

St. Patrick also confirmed as right and proper for observance, whatever was just in the Brehon laws, so as it was not at variance with the law of Christ, for the people had been guided by the Brehon laws from all antiquity, and it was not easy to overthrow them. Besides, many or most of them were framed with strict regard to justice and morality.

When St. Patrick was dying, an angel of the Lord was

sent to him, who announced to the great and holy saint that God had granted this favour to his prayers—namely, that his jurisdiction over the Church was ordained to be for ever at Armagh; and that Patrick, as the Apostle of Ireland, should be the judge of all the Irish at the last day, and none other, according to the promise made to the other apostles, "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel."

St. Ciaron.

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This eminent saint died at the early age of thirty-three; and it is said that his death was caused by the prayers of the other saints of Ireland, who were jealous of his power and fame for sanctity. St. Ciaron knowing that death was coming upon him, composed a verse which has been preserved as an appeal against the cruel fate that ended his life while he was yet in his prime. And the pathos of the quatrain is very tender and natural—

"I ask is it right, O King of Stars,
To reap a cornfield before it is ripe?
It is eating fruit before the time,
It is plucking the blossom from a hazel when it is white."

St. Martin.

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St. Martin was a bad man before his conversion, and, above all, was exceedingly close-fisted, as they say, to the poor; giving nothing and grasping all. So he was very rich but hated by every one.

One day, when going out, he charged the servant to have a fine batch of loaves ready made and baked by the time he returned. While she was kneading the dough in came a poor man and begged for some as he was hungry; but she told him she dare not give away anything or the master would beat her. Still the poor man begged the harder, and at last she gave him dough enough for a couple of loaves. However, when the girl's back was turned, he threw the dough into the oven and went his way without a word.

Now, when the dough was ready, the girl opened the oven to put in the loaves, but, behold, it was already quite full of baked bread and would hold no more. So when Martin came home she told him all the truth; and his heart smote him, and he cried out, "An angel of the Lord has been here; God has sent His messenger to rebuke me of my sins!" And he ran out to search for the man along the

road, and at last saw him a great way off. Then Martin flung off his cloak that he might run the faster; and when he came up to the man he fell on his knees before him on the ground, and cried out, "Oh, my Lord, I repent me of my sins; pray to God for me, for I know you are His angel." And from that moment Martin's heart was changed, and the devil left him; and he became a true saint and servant of God, and, above all, the saint and patron of the poor.

Nevertheless, St. Bridget was offended with St. Martin, because she thought he did not receive her with sufficient hospitality and consideration. Perhaps some of the old stinginess of nature still clung to him. And she thus pronounced her malediction over him—

"Oh, little man, the sea-wave shall come up over thy house, and thy name shall lie in ashes, while my name and fame shall be glorious all over the world."

And this was fulfilled; for the sea actually broke in and covered the saint's dwelling; and the house of St. Martin can still be seen low down beneath the waves, but if any one tries to reach it the house fades away into the mist and is seen no more.

There is an old superstition still observed by the people, that blood must be spilt on St. Martin's Day; so a goose is killed, or a black cock, and the blood is sprinkled over the floor and on the threshold. And some of the flesh is given to the first beggar that comes by, in the name and in honour of St. Martin.

In the Arran Isles St. Martin's Day is observed with particular solemnity, and it was held necessary, from ancient

times, to spill blood on the ground in honour of the saint. For this purpose a cock was sacrificed; but if such could not be procured people have been known to cut their finger in order to draw blood, and let it fall upon the earth. The custom arose in this way:—St. Martin, having given away all his goods to the poor, was often in want of food, and one day he entered a widow's house and begged for something to eat. The widow was poor, and having no food in the house, she sacrificed her young child, boiled it, and set it before the saint for supper. Having eaten, and taken his departure, the woman went over to the cradle to weep for her lost child; when lo! there he was, lying whole and well, in a beautiful sleep, as if no evil had ever happened to him; and to commemorate this miracle and from gratitude to the saint, a sacrifice of some living thing is made yearly in his honour. The blood is poured or sprinkled on the ground, and along the door-posts, and both within and without the threshold, and at the four corners of each room in the house.

For this symbol of purification by blood the rich farmers sacrifice a sheep; while the poorer people kill a black cock or a white hen, and sprinkle the blood according to ancient usage. Afterwards the whole family dine upon the sacrificial victim.

In some places it was the custom for the master of the house to draw a cross on the arm of each member of the family and mark it out in blood. This was a very sacred sign which no fairy or evil spirit, were they ever so strong, could overcome; and whoever was signed with the blood was safe.

There is a singular superstition forbidding work of a certain kind to be done on St. Martin's Day, the 11th of November. No woman should spin on that day; no miller should grind his corn, and no wheel should be turned. And this custom was long held sacred, and is still observed in the Western Islands.

St. Bridget.

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At one time a certain leper came to St. Bridget to beg a cow from her.

"Which would you prefer?" said the holy Bridget, "to be healed of your disease or to have the cow?"

"I would be healed," he answered.

Then she touched him, and he became whole and went away rejoicing.

After this Bridget's fame spread all over Ireland; and a man of the Britons, and his son, came to be healed; but she was at Mass, and sent to them to wait till Mass was over.

Now the Britons are a hasty people, and the man said, "You healed your own people yesterday and you shall heal us to-day."

Then Bridget came forth and prayed over them, and they were healed.

Another time, two lepers came to beg, and Bridget said, "I have but this one cow—take it between you and go in peace."

But one leper was proud, and made answer: "I shall

divide my goods with no man. Give me the cow and I shall go."

And she gave it to him.

Then the other leper said, "Give me your prayers, holy Bridget, I ask no more."

And she gave him her blessing. And as he turned to depart a man came in, and offered a cow as a present to the holy woman.

"Now the Lord has blessed you," she said to the humble leper. "Take this cow and depart to your home."

So the man drove the cow before him, and presently came up with the proud leper just at the ford of the river. "Cross you first," said the proud leper, "there is not room for two," and the humble leper crossed in safety with his cow; but when the other entered the ford, the river rose, and he and his cow were carried away and drowned, for the blessing of St. Bridget was not on him.

Another time, two lepers came to be healed, and Bridget ordered one of them to wash the other; which he did, and the man was healed.

"Now," she said, "do to your comrade as he has done to you; wash him with water that he may be made clean of his leprosy."

"Oh, veiled woman," he answered, "why should I, that am clean now in body and limb, touch this filthy leper of the blue-grey skin? Ask me not to do this thing."

Then Bridget took water and washed the leper herself. Immediately the other who had been healed, cried out, "A fire is raging under my skin;" and the disease came

again on him worse than ever. Thus was he punished for his pride.

The lark is sacred to St. Bridget because its song woke her every morning to prayers, when she had service for the women who were her converts.

The influence of St. Bridget remains a permanent power in Ireland even to this day, and she is much feared by the enemy of souls and the ill-doer. When Earl Strongbow was dying, he affirmed that he saw St. Bridget approaching his bed, and she struck him on the foot, and the wound she gave him mortified, and of this he died. This happened six hundred years after Bridget's death.

St. Bridget, throughout her long life, held the highest position and dignity in the Irish Church. She erected a temple in Kildare, ordained bishops, and was head and chief of all the sacred virgins.

She also held equal rank with the archbishop; if he had an episcopal chair (*cathedra episcopalis*), so St. Bridget had a virginal chair (*cathedra puellaris*), and was pre-eminent above all the abbesses of Ireland, or of the Scots, for sanctity and power.

St. Kieran.

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St. Kieran, also, did good service five hundred years after his death; for when a great chief and his band plundered Clonmacnoise and carried off the jewels from the shrine, the spirit of St. Kieran was seen in the doorway, crosier in hand, striking at the plunderers; and when they fled to their boat, St. Kieran raised up a strong wind that drove back the boat, and finally the chief robber was taken and put to death, having first confessed his crime, and testified as to St. Kieran's wrath against him.

St. Kevin.

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It is related of St. Kevin that after he had been seven years at Glendalough, a weariness of life came over him, and a longing to hear the voice of man once more. Then Satan came to him in the form of an angel, bright and beautiful, and persuaded him that he should quit the valley and travel abroad and see the world, while yet his youth was left to him. And St. Kevin was near yielding to the words of the tempter, when fortunately St. Munna came by that way, and he at once saw through the trick, and showed to St. Kevin that the advice was from the devil, and not from God. And St. Kevin promised St. Munna that he would never leave the valley till his death. However, God, not wishing that the saint should eat his heart away in idleness, bade him build a monastery on the east of the lake, the place where the resurrection was to be; and he sent his angel to show him the exact spot.

But St. Kevin, when he saw the place so wild and rude, could not help telling the friendly angel that it was very rugged and difficult to build on; and the stones were heavy and hard to be moved. Then the angel, to prevent any diffi-

culty in the building, rendered the stones light and easy to move, and so the work of building went on to the glory of God; and St. Kevin rejoiced in the task set before him.

And the monk who tells the story adds, that from that day in all the place which the angel appointed for the building, there is now no stone that cannot be lightly moved and easily worked all through the valley of Glendalough.

CHRISTIAN LEGENDS.

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THE Round Tower of Clonmacnoise was never finished, for the monks objected to the price demanded by the chief mason; and one day that he was at the top of the tower, they said he should never come down till he lowered the price; and they removed the scaffolding.

Then he said, "It is easier to pull down than to build a tower," and he began to cast down stone by stone, so that he could descend in safety.

On this the monks grew alarmed, and prayed him to desist and the price should be paid; so he came down at their request, but would never again lay hand to the work, so the tower remains unfinished to this day.

The first bells ever used in all Ireland were hung at Clonmacnoise, but the people of Athlone, being jealous, came at night to steal the bells, and succeeded in carrying them away in a boat. However, before they got out of sight of the church, the boat went down, and the bells were never recovered, though the river was dragged from Athlone to Shannon Bridge.

At the seven churches of Clonmacnoise is to be seen the

great cross of St. Kieran, beautifully carved of a stone not common to the country, called the Grecian stone, and if a woman can clasp the cross round with her arms she will never die in childbirth.

At a pattern held there one time, a soldier from Athlone shot off the hand of a figure of St. Kieran, which was over the grand entrance, but returning home he fell from the boat, and was drowned in the very spot where the bells went down a hundred years before.

At Saints' Island, in the Shannon, the ruins of a monastery, which was destroyed by King John, may still be seen. When the monks, broken-hearted and beggared, were leaving their beautiful home, one of them kneeled down and prayed to God for forgiveness of his enemies. Immediately a well of pure water sprang up where the monk had knelt; and the water even to this day is held by the people to have the power to cure all diseases, if the soul of the patient, as he drinks of the well, is free from all malice and the desire of revenge upon those who may have injured him.

Swearing Stones and Relics.

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THE CREMAVE.

In the old churchyard of the monastery at Saints' Island, there is also an ancient black marble flagstone; and the monks gave it power as *A Revealer of Truth*, and it is called the *Cremave*, or Swearing Stone.

Any one suspected of sin or crime is brought here from the country round, and if the accused swears falsely, the stone has the power to set a mark upon him and his race for seven generations. But if no mark appears then he is known to be innocent; and as long as the world lasts, the stone is to have this power, for so the monks decreed; and with many holy and mystic ceremonies they gave it consecration, as the "Revealer of Truth." And though the English burned the monastery and defaced the altar and carried off the holy vessels, yet they had no power over the Cremave, or Swearing Stone, which remains to this day.

Many years ago, so runs the tale, a murder was committed in the neighbourhood, and a certain man being suspected as the murderer, he was forced to go to the "clearing stone"; for the people said, "If he is innocent, the

Cremave will clear him; and if guilty, let him suffer for his crime."

So, on the appointed day, he went with his friends and the accuser to the Swearing Stone; and there he was met by the priest, who adjured him to speak the truth in presence of all the people and before the face of God.

The man laid his hand upon the stone, and solemnly swore that he was innocent; but instantly his right arm was shrivelled up, his feet failed, and he was carried home a miserable cripple, and so remained to the end of his life.

Some weeks after, a daughter was born to him, who bore across her forehead the impress of a bloody hand; and every one of his descendants have some strange mark, by which the people know that the race is accursed to the seventh generation; after which time the doom will be lifted, and the expiation made for the crime and the perjury will be considered sufficient by the Lord in heaven, who will then grant to the race pardon and grace at last.

RELICS FOR CLEARING FROM GUILT.

Another relic held in reverence for swearing on by an accused person is St. Finian's Dish. This was found about one hundred and fifty years ago, buried in the ruins of an old abbey. It is of silver with stones set in it, which, the people say, are the eyes of Christ looking at them while they swear. And when the dish is shaken a rattling noise is heard, which they believe is made by the Virgin Mary's bones that are enclosed therein.

Should a false oath be taken on the relic, the perjurer will at once be stricken by disease, and die before the year is out. And so great is the terror inspired by this belief, that men have fainted from fear when brought up to swear on it. This is done by placing the hand on the cross that is engraved in the centre of the dish, while the two eyes of Christ are fixed on the swearer who comes for clearance from guilt.

The *Ghar-Barra*, or Crosier of St. Barry, is also a holy relic once overlaid with gold, on which it was the custom to take a clearing oath; as the people held it in great reverence, and nothing was more dreaded than the consequence of a false oath on the *Ghar-Barra*. Once a man who swore falsely thereon had his mouth turned awry, and it so remained to his life's end, a proof of the saint's hatred for the sin of perjury. The relic is kept covered carefully with green cloth, and whoever is brought to take a clearing oath thereon must first lay down a small piece of silver for the guardian of the shrine.

INNIS-MURRY.

At Innis-Murry, Sligo, there is a large table-stone supported on eight perpendicular stones as a pedestal. And on the table are seventy-three stones, from five to twenty inches in circumference, which have been lying there from the most ancient times; for to remove them would be at the peril of one's life.

On these seventy-three stones all the anathematic spirit of the island is concentrated. If the islanders suffer any injury, real or supposed, they come and turn these stones, uttering a malediction over their enemy, and should he be guilty he will assuredly die, or suffer some calamity before the year is out.

A Scripture reader, having boldly taken away one of these stones to show the folly of the superstition, was obliged to restore it and to quit the island, or his life would not have been safe.

There is another stone on the island where alone can fires be lighted, should all the domestic fires become extinct, and the spark must be struck from the stone itself.

Innis-Murry is a desolate spot, rarely visited; the approach is so dangerous on account of the sunken rocks. The crops are scanty, and the soil is poor and light, growing only a short herbage of a spiral and sharp kind. Neither scythe nor sickle could be used in the entire island. Meal is unknown, and dairy produce scarcely to be had, as the grass can only support a few sheep; but the islanders have fish in abundance, crabs, lobsters, and mackerel especially.

A traveller, who visited the island about fifty years ago, describes the manners and mode of living as most primitive; but the women have the reputation of being exceedingly virtuous, and the households are happy and well conducted. At that time a rude stone image was venerated by the people, called "Father Molosh," but supposed to be an ancient pagan idol, probably Moloch. The priest, however, has since had it destroyed.

MYSTERIES OF FAIRY POWER.

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The Evil Stroke.

Some persons are possessed naturally with the power of the Evil Stroke, but it is not considered at all so unlucky as the Evil Eye; for the person who has it does not act from intentional malice but from necessity, from a force within him which acts without his will, and often to his deep regret; as in hurling matches, where a chance stroke of his may do serious injury, and even the dust of the earth raised by his foot has blinded his opponent for a week.

One day a young man, while wrestling with another in play at a fair, where they met by chance, struck him on the arm, which immediately became fixed and powerless as stone. His friends brought him home, but nothing would restore the power of the arm or bring back the life; so after he had lain in this state for three days his family sent for the young man who had struck him, to ask for his help. When he came and saw the arm stiff as stone, he anointed it all over with his spittle, making also the

sign of the cross; and after some time the arm began to move again with life, and finally was quite restored. But the young man of the Evil Stroke was so dismayed at this proof of the strange power in him, that he would never again join in sports for fear of some unlucky accident.

The power, however, is sometimes very useful, as in the case of attack from a bull or a ferocious dog; for a touch from the hand of a person possessing the Evil Stroke at once quells the madness in the animal, who will crouch down trembling with fear, and become as incapable of doing injury as if suddenly and powerfully mesmerized.

But the power does not come by volition, only at intervals; and the person possessing it does not himself know the moment when it can be effectively exercised.

Women, also, have the mysterious gift of this strange occult force, and one young girl was much dreaded in the country in consequence; for anything struck by her, beast or man, became instantly paralyzed, as if turned to stone. One day, at a hurling match, she threw a lump of clay at the winner in anger, because her own lover had failed to win the prize. Immediately the young victor fell down stunned and lifeless, and was so carried home to his mother. Then they sent in all haste for the young girl to restore him to consciousness; but she was so frightened at her own evil work that she went and hid herself. Finding it then impossible to bring her, his friends sent for the fairy doctor, who, by dint of many charms and much stroking, at last restored the young man to life. The girl, however, was in such dread of the curses of the mother, that she fled, and took service in a distant part of the

country. And all the people rejoiced much over her departure from amongst them.

Yet it was considered lucky in some ways to have a fairy-stricken child in the house, for the fairies generally did a good turn by the family to compensate for the evil. And so there was always plenty of butter in the churn, and the cattle did not sicken wherever there was a stricken child.

It is also lucky to employ a half-simpleton about the farm, and to be kind to the deaf and dumb, and other afflicted creatures. No one in Ireland would harm them or turn them out of their way, and they always get food and drink for the asking, without any payment being thought of or accepted.

THE CHANGELING.

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A WOMAN was one night lying awake while her husband slept, when the door suddenly opened and a tall dark man entered, of fierce aspect, followed by an old hag with a child in her arms—a little, misshapen, sickly-looking little thing. They both sat down by the fire to warm themselves, and after some time the man looked over at the cradle that stood beside the mother's bed with her boy in it, and kept his eyes on it for several minutes. Then he rose, and when the mother saw him walking over direct to the cradle, she fainted and knew no more.

When she came to herself she called to her husband, and bade him light a candle; this he did, on which the old hag in the corner rose up at once and blew it out. Then he lit it a second time, and it was blown out; and still a third time he lit the candle, when again it was blown out, and a great peal of laughter was heard in the darkness.

On this the man grew terribly angry, and taking up the tongs he made a blow at the hag; but she slipped away, and struck him on the arm with a stick she held

in her hand. Then he grew more furious, and beat her on the head till she roared, when he pushed her outside and locked the door.

After this he lit the candle in peace; but when they looked at the cradle, lo! in place of their own beautiful boy, a hideous little creature, all covered with hair, lay grinning at them. Great was their grief and lamentation, and both the man and his wife wept and wailed aloud for the loss of their child, and the cry of their sorrow was bitter to hear.

Just then the door suddenly opened, and a young woman came in, with a scarlet handkerchief wound round her head.

"What are you crying for," she asked, "at this time of night, when every one should be asleep?"

"Look at this child in the cradle," answered the man, "and you will cease to wonder why we mourn and are sad at heart." And he told her all the story.

When the young woman went over to the cradle and looked at the child, she laughed, but said nothing.

"Your laughter is stranger than our tears," said the man. "Why do you laugh in the face of our sorrows?"

"Because," she said, "this is my child that was stolen from me to-night; for I am one of the fairy race, and my people, who live under the fort on the hill, thought your boy was a fine child, and so they changed the babies in the cradle; but, after all, I would rather have my own, ugly as he is, than any mortal child in the world. So now I'll tell you how to get back your own son, and I'll take away mine at once. Go to the old fort on the hill when

the moon is full, and take with you three sheafs of corn and some fire, and burn them one after the other. And when the last sheaf is burning, an old man will come up through the smoke, and he will ask you what it is you desire. Then tell him you must have your child back, or you will burn down the fort, and leave no dwelling-place for his people on the hill. Now, the fairies cannot stand against the power of fire, and they will give you back your child at the mere threat of burning the fort. But mind, take good care of him after, and tie a nail from a horse-shoe round his neck, and then he will be safe."

With that the young woman took up the ugly little imp from the cradle in her arms, and was away before they could see how she got out of the house.

Next night, when the moon was full, the man went to the old fort with the three sheafs of corn and the fire, and burned them one after the other; and as the second was lighted there came up an old man and asked him what was his desire.

"I must have my child again that was stolen," he answered, "or I'll burn down every tree on the hill, and not leave you a stone of the fort where you can shelter any more with your fairy kindred."

Then the old man vanished, and there was a great silence, but no one appeared.

On this the father grew angry, and he called out in a loud voice, "I am lifting the third sheaf now, and I'll burn and destroy and make desolate your dwelling-place, if my child is not returned."

Then a great tumult and clamour was heard in the fort,

and a voice said, "Let it be. The power of the fire is too strong for us. Bring forth the child."

And presently the old man appeared, carrying the child in his arms.

"Take him," he said. "By the spell of the fire, and the corn you have conquered. But take my advice, draw a circle of fire, with a hot coal this night, round the cradle when you go home, and the fairy power cannot touch him any more, by reason of the fire.

So the man did as he was desired, and by the spell of fire and of corn the child was saved from evil, and he grew and prospered. And the old fort stands to this day safe from harm, for the man would allow no hand to move a stone or harm a tree; and the fairies still dance there on the rath, when the moon is full, to the music of the fairy pipes, and no one hinders them.

The Fairy Doctor.

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If a healthy child suddenly droops and withers, that child is fairy-struck, and a fairy doctor must be at once called in. Young girls also, who fall into rapid decline, are said to be fairy-struck; for they are wanted in Fairy-land as brides for some chief or prince, and so they pine away without visible cause till they die.

The other malign influences that act fatally on life are the Wind and the Evil Eye. The evil power of the Wind is called a fairy-blast; while, of one suffering from the Evil Eye, they say he has been "overlooked."

The fairy doctor must pronounce from which of these three causes the patient is suffering. The fairy-stroke, or the fairy-blast, or the Evil Eye; but he must take no money for the opinion given. He is paid in some other way; by free gracious offerings in gratitude for help given.

A person who visited a great fairy doctor for advice, thus describes the process of cure at the interview:—

"The doctor always seems as if expecting you, and had full knowledge of your coming. He bids you be seated, and after looking fixedly on your face for some moments,

his proceedings begin. He takes three rods of witch hazel, each three inches long, and marks them separately, 'For the Stroke,' 'For the Wind,' 'For the Evil Eye.' This is to ascertain from which of these three evils you suffer. He then takes off his coat, shoes, and stockings; rolls up his shirt sleeves, and stands with his face to the sun in earnest prayer. After prayer he takes a dish of pure water and sets it by the fire, then kneeling down, he puts the three hazel rods he had marked into the fire, and leaves them there till they are burned black as charcoal. All the time his prayers are unceasing; and when the sticks are burned, he rises, and again faces the sun in silent prayer, standing with his eyes uplifted and hands crossed. After this he draws a circle on the floor with the end of one of the burned sticks, within which circle he stands, the dish of pure water beside him. Into this he flings the three hazel rods, and watches the result earnestly. The moment one sinks he addresses a prayer to the sun, and taking the rod out of the water he declares by what agency the patient is afflicted. Then he grinds the rod to powder, puts it in a bottle which he fills up with water from the dish, utters an incantation or prayer over it, in a low voice, with clasped hands held over the bottle. But what the words of the prayer are no one knows, they are kept as solemn mysteries, and have been handed down from father to son through many generations, from the most ancient times. The potion is then given to be carried home, and drunk that night at midnight in silence and alone. Great care must be taken that the bottle never touches the ground; and the person carrying it must speak no word, and never

look round till home is reached. The other two sticks he buries in the earth in some place unseen and unknown. If none of the three sticks sink in the water, then he uses herbs as a cure. Vervain, eyebright, and yarrow are favourite remedies, and all have powerful properties known to the adept; but the words and prayers he utters over them are kept secret, and whether they are good or bad, or addressed to Deity or to a demon, none but himself can tell."

These are the visible mysteries of the fairy doctor while working out his charms and incantations. But other fairy doctors only perform the mysteries in private, and allow no one to see their mode of operation or witness the acts of prayers.

If a potion is made up of herbs it must be paid for in silver; but charms and incantations are never paid for, or they would lose their power. A present, however, may be accepted as an offering of gratitude.

The Poet's Spell.

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A very ancient story, as old as the tenth century, is narrated, and firmly believed by the people, that once on a time when the reapers were at work, a fine handsome young married woman, who was in the field with them, suddenly fell down dead. This caused a great fear and consternation, especially as it was asserted that just before the fatal event, a fairy blast had passed over the field, carrying a cloud of dust and stones with it; and there could be no doubt but that the fairies had rushed by in the cloud, and struck the woman dead as they passed.

Then her people sent for the great wise poet of the tribe, who was reputed to have the power by his song to break the strongest fairy spells: and he chanted low music over her, and uttered mystic incantations, the words of which no man heard; but after a while the woman unclosed her eyes and rose up, restored to life.

When they questioned her, she told them all she knew.

"In sickness I was," she said, "and I appeared to be dead, for I could neither speak nor move, till the song of the poet gave me power. Then the life rose up in me again, and the strength, and I was healed."

Charm for the Fairy Stroke.

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There is a very ancient and potent charm which may be tried with great effect in case of a suspected fairy-stroke.

Place three rows of salt on a table in three lines, three equal measures to each row. The person performing the spell then encloses the rows of salt with his arm, leaning his head down over them, while he repeats the Lord's Prayer three times over each row—that is, nine times in all. Then he takes the hand of the one who has been fairy-struck, and says over it, "By the power of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, let this disease depart, and the spell of the evil spirits be broken! I adjure, I command you to leave this man [naming him]. In the name of God I pray; in the name of Christ I adjure; in the name of the Spirit of God I command and compel you to go back and leave this man free! Amen! Amen! Amen!"

THE FARMER'S FATE.

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THE peasants have the greatest dread of the fairy-stroke, and consider it the most dangerous indication of fairy hostility. When a person is struck, he becomes wholly insensible to external things, as if his soul had been taken out of him and carried away.

A farmer once began to build a barn on a fairy circle, to the great horror of the neighbours, who warned him of the danger; but he only laughed at their nonsense, and built and finished his barn on the fairy rath.

However, riding home one evening after sunset, he was suddenly "struck," and fell insensible to the ground. They carried him home and laid him on his bed, where he lay for several days, his eyes fixed and staring without any motion of the eyelids, and no indication of life remaining, except his colour, which never changed.

All the doctors came and looked at him, but could do nothing. There was no fracture nor injury of any kind to his frame; so the doctors shook their heads and went their way, saying they would call again in a day or two. But the family objected to delay, and sent at once for the great fairy doctor of the district. The moment he came he threw herbs on the fire, when a fragrant smell filled the room like church incense. Then he pounded some herbs and mixed

a liquid with them, but what the herbs were, no one knew. And with this mixture he touched the brow and the lips and the hands of the man, and sprinkled the rest over his insensible form. After this he told them to keep silence round him for two hours, when he would return and finish the cure. And so it happened, for in two hours the life came back to the man, though he could not speak. But strength came gradually; and by the next day he rose up, and said he had dreamed a dream, and heard a voice saying to him, "Pull down the barn, for ill-luck is on it." Accordingly he gave orders to his men, and every stick and stone was carried away, and the fairy rath left free again for the fairies to dance on, as in the olden time, when they were the gods of the earth, long before men came to dispute their rights, and take possession of their ancient pleasure grounds—an indignity no high-spirited fairy could calmly endure. For in their councils they had decreed that the fairy rath, at least, should be sacred for all time, and woe to the man who builds his house thereon. An evil fate is on him and on the house for evermore. Down it must come, or the evil spell will never be lifted. There is no hope for it, for the most dangerous and subtle of all enemies is an angry fairy.

Nor should the paths even be crossed by work of human hand, which the fairies traverse from one palace to another. Their line of march must not be impeded. Finvarra and his men would resent such a gross insult to the royal fairy rights, and severely punish the audacious and offending mortal. Not even the Grand Jury would be allowed to interfere, for if they did, every man of them would be demolished in some way or other by fairy power.

THE FAIRY RATH.

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THE fairies, beside being revengeful, are also very arrogant, and allow no interference with their old-established rights.

There is a rath in the Queen's County, only four yards in diameter, but held so sacred as the fairies' dancing ground that no one ever dared to remove a handful of earth from the mound; and at night the sweetest low music may be heard floating round the hill, as if played by silver bagpipes.

One evening a boy lay down on the rath to listen to the music, and, without thinking, began to gather up balls of the clay and fling them hither and thither in sport, when suddenly he was struck down by a violent blow and became senseless.

There he was found by his people, who went to search for him; and when he came to himself he bleated like a calf, and it was a long time before he recovered his reason, for the power of the fairies is great, and none can resist it.

THE HOLY WELLS.

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THERE is no superstition stronger in Ireland than a belief in the curative power of the sacred wells that are scattered over the country; fountains of health and healing which some saint had blessed, or by which some saint had dwelt in the far-off ancient times. But well-worship is even older than Christianity. It is part of the early ritual of humanity, brought from the Eastern lands by the first Aryan tribes who migrated westward, passing along from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic shores.

The Delphic oracle in its origin was nothing more than a holy well, shadowed by trees, on which were hung the votive offerings of the praying peasants, long before the rival kings brought to the sacred spot their votive tributes of silver and gold, and crowns of precious stones.

In Ireland the beautiful, picturesque, and tree-shadowed wells of the country were held sacred by the Druid priests, as is evident from the many remarkable Druidical remains that have been found in their vicinity—ruins of temples and pillar-stones, and stones with strange carvings. Much also of the ancient Druidic ceremonial has been preserved by the people, such as the symbolic dances, the traditions of

sun-worship, and other pagan rites, which were incorporated into the Christian ritual of well-worship by the early converts, and are still retained, though, through the lapse of ages, they have entirely lost their original significance, and are now only practised as ancient customs, for which the Irish have great reverence, as having come down to them from their forefathers. The ceremonial is the same at all these places of devout pilgrimage. The pilgrims go round the well a certain number of times, either three or nine, creeping on their hands and knees, but always from east to west, following the apparent motion of the sun, and reciting paters and aves all the time. At the close of each round they build up a small pile of stones ; for at the last day the angels will reckon these stones, and he who has said the most prayers will have the highest place in heaven, each saint keeping count for his own votaries. The patient then descends the broken steps to the well and, kneeling down, bathes his forehead and hands in the water, after which oblation the pain or disease he suffered from will be gradually removed, and depart from him for evermore.

At some wells there is often a rude stone monument of the ancient times, and the eyes of the pilgrim must be kept steadily fixed on it while reciting the prayers.

Whenever a white-thorn or an ash-tree shadows the place, the well is held to be peculiarly sacred ; and on leaving, having first drunk of the water, the patient ties a votive offering to the branches—generally a coloured handkerchief or a bright red strip cut from a garment ; and these offerings are never removed. They remain for years fluttering in the

wind and the rain, just as travellers have described the votive offerings on the sacred trees that shadow the holy wells of Persia. They are signs and tokens of gratitude to the patron saint, and are meant to show the devil that he has no longer power to harm the praying pilgrim, or torment him with pains and aches as heretofore. It is not supposed that the water of the well has any natural medicinal properties. The curative efficacy is wholly due to the observance of the ritual in honour of the saint, whose spirit and influence is still over the well, by which he lived, and of which he drank while living on the earth.

THE WHITE STONES.

At many of the wells quantities of beautiful white stones are found that glitter in the sun, and these are highly esteemed by the pilgrims to build up their prayer monuments.

One day some women were eagerly collecting these stones, after each round of praying, in order to build up a monument; when suddenly a strain of soft, exquisite music seemed to rise up from the water and float by them. In their joy and wonder the women clapped their hands and laughed aloud, when instantly the music ceased, and the pile of stones fell down. By which sign they knew that they should not have laughed while the angels were singing; and they fell on their knees and prayed.

A holy well once lost all its power because a murder had been committed near it; and another because it was cursed

by a priest in consequence of the immorality that pervailed at the patterns.

THE SACRED TROUT.

The water of the sacred well must never be used for household purposes—cooking, washing, or the like. But after the well was cursed by the priest, and the tents were struck, and no pattern was held there any longer, it lost all its sanctity, and was no longer held sacred by the people, who began to fill their pails, and carry the water away home for cooking and household use; while also they all washed their clothes down at the well, just as if no sanctity had ever been in the water.

However, one day a woman having put down a pot of water to boil, found that no amount of fire would heat it. Still it remained ice-cold, as if just drawn from the well. So she looked carefully into the pot, and there beheld the Sacred Speckled Trout sailing round and round quite contented and happy. On seeing this she knew that the curse was lifted from the well, and she ran and told the priest. His reverence having seen the Sacred Trout with his own eyes, ordered it to be carried back to the well, the water of which at once regained all its sacred powers by the blessing of the priest; and he gave the people leave thenceforth to hold their pattern there, so as they behaved themselves like decent God-fearing Christians for the future. But the water was not allowed to be carried away any more to their houses for household purposes; the desecration of the holy water of a sacred well being strictly forbidden as dangerous and unlucky.

St. Augustine's Well.

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At a holy well in the south, dedicated to St. Augustine, the friars began to build a convent. And during all the hours of work bells were heard ringing sweetly and voices singing; but one day a woman came and washed her feet in the water of the well, and thereupon all the bells ceased and the singing stopped, and the work could not go on. So the friars chose another site, and they drew a circle round it, within which no woman was to set her foot; and after this the bells began to ring again and the voices sang, and the work went on safely till the convent was completed in the name of God and St. Augustine; but no woman during all that time ever set foot on the holy ground.

THE GRILLED TROUT.

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IN Sligo there is a well called *Tobber-na-alt*, beautifully shadowed by trees, the branches of which are thickly hung with all sorts of votive offerings from those who have been cured by the water; and miracle-men attended, who professed to heal diseases by charms, prayers, and incantations.

A man who had been born blind once recited his experiences there. "Oh, Christians, look on me! I was blind from my birth and saw no light till I came to the blessed well; now I see the water and the speckled trout down at the bottom, with the white cross on his back. Glory be to God for the cure." And when the people heard that he could really see the speckled trout, of course they all believed in the miracle. For a tradition exists that a sacred trout has lived there from time immemorial, placed in the well by the saint who first sanctified the water. Now there was an adventurous man who desired much to get possession of this trout, and he watched till at last he caught it asleep. Then he carried it off and put it on the gridiron. The trout bore the grilling of one side very patiently; but when the man tried to turn it on the fire, the trout suddenly

jumped up and made off as hard as it could back to the well, where it still lives, and can be seen at times by those who have done proper penance and paid their dues to the priest, with one side all streaked and marked brown by the bars of the gridiron, which can never be effaced.

LEGEND OF NEAL-MOR.

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THERE is a great hole or well near the river Suir, always filled with water, whose depth no man has yet fathomed. Near it is a castle, which in old times belonged to a powerful chief called *Neal-mor*. One day while his servants were saving the hay, a violent tempest of wind and rain came on, which quite destroyed the crop. Then Neal-mor was filled with rage, and he mounted his horse and drew his sword, and rode forth to the field; and there he challenged the Lord God Himself to battle. And he swung his sword round his head and struck at the air, as if he would kill and slay the Great Invisible Spirit. On which suddenly a strange thing happened, for a great whirlwind arose and the earth opened, and Neal-mor, still astride on his horse and with his sword in his hand, was lifted high up into the air and then cast down alive into the great hole, called *Poul-mor*, which may be seen to this day, and the castle is still standing by the margin. But no trace of Neal-mor or his steed was ever again beheld. They perished utterly by the vengeance of God.

But some time after his disappearance, a rude stone

figure seated on a horse, was cast up out of the earth; and then all men knew the fate of the terrible chief who had braved the wrath of God, for here was his image and the sign of his destruction. This stone figure is still preserved at the castle, and tradition says that if it were removed the whole castle would crumble to pieces in a single night and be cast into the *Foul-mor*.

St. John's Well.

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At St. John's well, County Cork, there is a large stone, believed to be the real true head of John the Baptist, grown hard and solid from time and the action of the elements. And the stone has certainly a rude resemblance to a human head.

Suspected persons are brought to swear on it for a clearing from guilt; for it is held in high reverence. Compacts are also made there, which are held inviolate, for no one who swears with his hand on the stone, would ever dream of breaking the oath, and each person present as witness scratches a cross on the surface with a sharp piece of slate.

A number of pagan remains are in the vicinity, but they are now held in reverence as places of Christian sanctity.

Some time ago an ancient stone image was dug up from the earth, which antiquarians pronounced to be a pagan idol, probably the Irish Siva. This was at first consecrated as Saint Gobnath, but afterwards the priest destroyed the image with his own hands.

All the paths round the well are marked deep by the lines of praying pilgrims, who go round it on their knees. And

there are piles of the little stones that mark the prayers of the penitents, all ready for the angels to count. Most of the stones are of pure quartz, white and glistening, and these are highly esteemed.

The Well of Fionn Ma-Coul.

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The ancient churches and cells of the saints were generally placed in the vicinity of a well, which then became sanctified and endowed with miraculous healing power. Or the well may have been held sacred by the Druids, and the scene of their pagan rites; therefore selected by the saint specially as his dwelling-place, so that he might bring it under the fosterage and holy influence of Christianity.

The grave of the great Fionn was laid by a celebrated well in the County Cork, and it is certain that a massive human jawbone was found there not long ago, far exceeding in size the bones of the present race of men. This jaw-bone was sent to London to be inspected by the learned philosophers, but was never returned—a great and grievous wrong to the renowned Irish chief, for no doubt the mighty Fionn will want it badly at the last day, when he is gathering up his bones to appear before the Lord.

St. Seenan's Well.

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There is a place on the shore of Scattery Island, where, according to the most ancient tradition, a sacred well once existed, with miraculous curative powers. But no one could ever discover the place, for at high water the sea covered every point up to the edge of the land, and the shifting sand made all efforts to find the locality of the well vain and fruitless.

But one day a young man who was lame in both legs from the effects of a fall, and much disabled in consequence, was going along the shore with some companions, when he suddenly sank up to his waist in the sand. With much difficulty, and after a long while, his comrades managed to haul him up, when to their amazement they found that his legs were now quite straight, and he stood up before them four inches taller than before he sank down into the sand.

So at once they knew that the sacred well must have worked the cure, and they dug and dug and cleared away the sand, till at last they came on some ancient steps, and down below lay the well, clear and fresh, and untouched by

the salt of the sea, the holy well of St. Seenan, that their fathers and forefathers had vainly looked for.

Now there was great rejoicing in the country when the news spread; and all the people from far and near who had pains and ailments rushed off to the well and drank of the waters and poured libations of it over their persons, wherever the pain or the disease lay, and in a short time wonderful cures were effected. So next day still greater crowds arrived to try their good luck. But when they came to the place, not a vestige of the well could be found. The sand and the sea had covered all, and from that day to this the holy well of St. Seenan has never been seen by mortal eyes.

KIL-NA-GREINA.

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Tober Kil-na-Greina (the well of the fountain of the sun) was discovered only about eighty years ago, by a strange chance in the County Cork.

The land was a desolate marsh, no one built on it, and nothing grew on it or near it. But a large grey stone lay there, with a natural hollow in the centre that would hold about a gallon of water, and close by were the remains of an old pagan fort.

One day, the farmer who owned the land carried off this great grey stone to use as a drinking trough for his cattle. But not long after all the cattle grew sick, and then all the children sickened, so the farmer said there was ill luck in the business, and he carried back the stone to its old place, on which all the household recovered their health. Thereupon the farmer began to think there must be something wonderful and mysterious in the locality, so he had the marsh thoroughly drained, after which process they came upon an ancient stone circle, and in the midst was a well of beautiful fresh water. Some people said there was writing on the stones, and strange carvings; but it was generally be-

lieved to be a Druid temple and oracle, for there was a tradition that a woman called the *Ban-na-Naomha* (the nymph of the well) had once lived there—and that she had the gift of prophecy, and uttered oracles to those who sought her at the shrine by the well; and there was a little wooden image of her, also, that used to speak to the people—so it was said and believed. It is certain, however, that a pagan temple once existed there, for which reason St. Patrick cursed the land and turned it into a marsh, and the well was hidden for a thousand years, according to St. Patrick's word.

On the discovery of the well the whole country flocked to it for cures. Tents were erected and a pattern was organized, which went on for some years with great success, and many authentic instances are recorded of marvellous miracles performed there.

The ritual observed was very strict at the beginning, three draughts of water were taken by the pilgrims, the number of drinks three, the number of rounds on their knees were three, thus making the circuit of the well nine times. After each round the pilgrim laid a stone on the ancient altar in the Druid circle, called "the well of the sun," and these stones, named in Irish "the stones of the sun," are generally pure white, and about the size of a pigeon's egg. They have a beautiful appearance after rain when the sun shines on them, and were doubtless held sacred to the sun in pagan times. The angels will reckon these stones at the last day, but each particular saint will take charge of his own votaries and see that the stones are properly counted, for each man will receive forgiveness according to their number.

But gradually the revelry at the pattern gave occasion for

so much scandal, that the priest denounced the well from the altar, along with all the wickedness it fostered and encouraged. Still the people would not give up the pattern, and the drinking, and dancing, and gambling, and fighting went on worse than ever, until one day a man was killed. After this a curse seemed to have fallen on the place. The well lost all its miraculous powers, no cures were effected; the maimed, the halt, and the blind prayed before it, and went the rounds, and piled the stones as usual, but no help came, and worst sign of all, a great pagan stone on which a cross had been erected, fell down of its own accord, and the cross lay shattered on the ground. Then all the people knew that the curse of blood and of St. Patrick was indeed over the well; so it was deserted, and the tents were struck, and no pattern was ever held there any more, for the virtue of healing had gone from "the fountain of the sun," and never has come back to it through all the years.

Even the *Ban-Naomha*, the nymph of the fountain, who used to manifest herself occasionally to the regenerate under the form of a trout, disappeared at the same time, and though she may be heard of at other sacred wells, was never again seen by the devout pilgrims who watched for her appearance at the *Tober-kil-na-Greina*.

The Well of Worship.

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At *Tober-Mire*, the well of the field of worship, County Cork, there are also many pagan monuments, and it is evident that the vicinity was one of the strongholds of the Druids in ancient times, where they had a temple, a burial-ground, and stones for sacrifice; a much larger population existed also round the temple than can now be numbered in the same locality.

THE BRIDE'S WELL.

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NEAR the last-named well is the Bride's Well, *Tober-Breda* (the holy well of St. Bridget). There is a stone oratory here of fabulous antiquity, with a doorway fashioned after the Egyptian model, sloping towards the top; also an ancient white-thorn covered with votive offerings, amongst which one may see many a long lock of the splendid dark hair of the Irish southern women, who adopt this antique traditional symbol of self-sacrifice to show their gratitude to the patron saint.

St. Bridget took the name of the pagan goddess Brighita in order to destroy and obliterate the idolatrous rites and transfer the devotion of the people to the Christian ceremonies, and *Tober-Breda* is now considered of the highest sanctity, being under the special patronage of St. Bridget.

THE IRISH FAKIR.

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MANY of the professional prayer-men, or Fakirs, resort to the *Tober-Breda* during the pattern, and manage to obtain gifts and contributions and all sorts of excellent things in exchange for their prayers from the rich farmers and young girls, to whom they promise good luck, and perhaps also a lover who will be handsome and young.

These Irish Fakirs, or sacred fraternity of beggars, lead a pleasant, thoroughly idle life. They carry a wallet and a staff, and being looked on as holy men endowed with strange spiritual gifts, they are entirely supported by the voluntary gifts of the people, who firmly believe in the mysterious efficiency of their prayers and blessings and prognostics of luck.

One of these Fakirs towards the end of his life was glad to find shelter in the poor-house. He was then eighty years of age, but a tall, erect old man, with flowing white beard and hair, keen eyes, and of most venerable aspect.

A gentleman who saw him there, being much struck with his dignified and remarkable appearance, induced him to tell the story of his life, which was marked by several strange and curious incidents.

He said he was a farmer's son, but from his earliest youth hated work, and only liked to spend the long summer day lying on the grass gazing up into the clouds dreaming and thinking where they were all sailing to, and longing to float away with them to other lands.

Meanwhile his father raged and swore and beat him, often cruelly, because he would not work. But all the same, he could not bring himself to be digging from morning to night, and herding cattle, and keeping company only with labourers.

So when he was about twenty he formed a plan to run away; for, he thought, if the stupid old Fakirs who are lame and blind and deaf find people ready to support them, all for nothing, might not he have a better chance for getting board and lodging without work, since he had youth and health and could tell them stories to no end of the great old ancient times.

So one night he quitted his father's house secretly, and went forth on his travels into the wide world, only to meet bitter disappointment and rude repulse, for the farmers would have nothing to say to him, nor the farmers' wives. Every one eyed him with suspicion. "Why," they said, "should a great stalwart young fellow over six feet high go about the country begging? He was a tramp and meant no good." And they chased him away from their grounds.

Then he thought he would disguise himself as a regular Fakir; so he got a long cloak, and took a wallet and a staff, and hid his raven black hair under a close skull cap, and tried to look as old as he could.

But the regular Fakirs soon found him out, and their

spite and rage was great, for all of them were either lame of a leg or blind of an eye, and they said: "Why should this great broad-shouldered young fellow with the black eyes come and take away our chances of living, when he ought to be able to work and earn enough to keep himself without robbing us of our just rights?" And they grumbled and snarled at him like so many dogs, and set people to spy on him and watch him.

Still he was determined to try his luck on every side; so he went to all the stations round about and prayed louder and faster than any pilgrim or Fakir amongst the whole lot.

But wherever he went he saw a horrible old hag for ever following him. Her head was wrapped up in an old red shawl, and nothing was seen of her face except two eyes, that glared on him like coals of fire whichever way he turned. And now, in truth, his life became miserable to him because of this loathsome hag. So he went from station to station to escape her; but still she followed him, and the sound of her stick on the ground was ever after him like the hammering of a nail into his coffin, for he felt sure he would die of the torment and horror.

At last he thought he would try *Tobar-Breda* for his next station, as it was several miles off and she might not be able to follow him so far. So he went, and not a sign of her was to be seen upon the road. This rejoiced his heart, and he kneeled down at the well and was saying his prayers louder and faster than ever when he looked up, and there, kneeling right opposite to him at the other side of the road, was the detestable old witch. But she took no notice of

him, only went on saying her prayers and telling her beads as if no one were by.

Presently, however, she stooped down to wash her face in the well, and, as she threw up the water with her hands, she let the red shawl slip down over her shoulders, and then the young man beheld to his astonishment a beautiful young girl before him with a complexion like the lily and the rose, and soft brown hair falling in showers of curls over her snow-white neck.

He had only a glimpse for a moment while she cast the water in her face, and then she drew the red shawl again over her head and shoulders and was the old hag once more that had filled him with horror. But that one glimpse was enough to make his heart faint with love; and now for the first time she turned her burning eyes full on him, and kept them fixed until he seemed to swoon away in an ecstasy of happiness, and knew nothing more till he found her seated beside him, holding his hand in hers, and still looking intently on his face with her glittering eyes.

"Come away," she whispered; "follow me. We must leave this crowd of pilgrims. I have much to say to you."

So he rose up, and they went away together to a secluded spot, far from the noise and tumult of the station. Then she threw off the shawl, and took the bandage from her face, and said, "Look on me. Can you love me? I have followed you day by day for love of you. Can you love me in return, and join your fate to mine? I have money enough for both, and I'll teach you the mysteries by which we can gain more."

And from that day forth they two travelled together all

over the country; and they practised many strange mysteries and charms, for Elaine, his wife, was learned in all the secrets of herb lore. And the people paid them well for their help and knowledge, so that they never wanted anything, and lived like princes, though never an evil act was done by their hands, nor did a word of strife ever pass between them.

Thus they lived happily for many years, till an evil day came when Elaine was struck by sickness, and she died.

Then the soul of the man seemed to die with her, and all his knowledge left him, and sad and weary, and tired of all things, he finally came to end his days in the poor-house, old, poor, and broken-hearted. Yet still he had the bearing of one born for a higher destiny, and the noble dignity as of a discrowned king.

Such was the strange story told to the gentleman by the aged Fakir in the poor-house, a short time before his death.

Sacred Trees.

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The large old hawthorns, growing singly in a field or by an ancient well, are considered very sacred; and no one would venture to cut them down, for the fairies dance under the branches at night, and would resent being interfered with.

There is a Holy Stone in an island of the Shannon, called St. Patrick's Stone. It is shadowed by an aged hawthorn, the perfume of which can be scented far off on the mainland in the flowering season. At the top of this stone is a large hollow, always filled with water by the rain or the dew, which is kept from evaporation by the heavy shadows of the branching hawthorn. It is believed that the water of this hollow has great healing power, and sometimes when a patient is brought from a distance, a rude stone shed is built under the tree, and there he is laid till the cure is completed by the water of the Holy Stone. On leaving he ties a votive offering to the tree, which is always covered with these memorials of gratitude.

In autumn the people go to bewail the dead at St. Patrick's Stone ; and the mournful Irish chant may be often heard rising up in the still evening air with weird and solemn effect.

TOBER-NA-DARA.

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Tober-na-Dara (the well of tears) was so called because it overflowed one time for a mile round, from the tears of the Irish wives and mothers who came there to weep for their fallen kindred, who had been slain in a battle, fighting against Cromwell's troopers of the English army.

Lough Neagh.

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Wonderful tales are related about the formation of Lough Neagh; and the whole country round abounds with traditions. One of them affirms that the great Fionn Ma-Coul, being in a rage one day, took up a handful of earth and flung it into the sea; and the handful was of such a size that where it fell it formed the Isle of Man, and the hollow caused by its removal became the basin of the present Lough Neagh.

Another legend is that a holy well once existed in the locality, blessed and sanctified by a saint with wonderful miraculous powers of healing; provided that every patient on leaving, after cure, carefully closed the wicket-gate that shut in the well. But once, however, a woman having forgotten this information, left the gate open, when instantly the indignant waters sprang from their bed and pursued the offender, who fled in terror before the advancing waves, until at last she sank down exhausted, when the waters closed over her, and she was no more seen. But along the track of her flight the waters remained, and formed the great lake now existing, which is exactly the length

the woman traversed in her flight from the angry spirit of the lake.

Mysterious influences still haunt the locality all round Lough Neagh; for it is the most ancient dwelling-place of the fairies, and when they pass at night, from one island to another, soft music is heard floating by, and then the boatmen know that the fairies are out for a pleasure trip; and one man even averred that he saw them going by in the track of the moonbeam, a crowd of little men all dressed in green with red caps, and the ladies in silver gossamer. And he liked these pretty creatures, and always left a little *poteen* for them in the bottle when he was on the island. In return for which attention they gave him the best of good luck in fishing and in everything else; for never a gauger came next or nigh his place while the fairies protected him, and many a time they led the gauger into a bog, and otherwise discomfited him, when he and his men were after a still.

So the fisherman loved his little friends, and they took great care of him; for even in the troublous times of '93, when the wreckers were all over the country, they did him no harm; though indeed the same wreckers knew where to find a good glass of something when they came his way, and he always gave it to them with a heart and a half; for didn't they tell him they were going to free Ireland from the Sassenach tyranny.

Down deep, under the waters of Lough Neagh, can still be seen, by those who have the gift of fairy vision, the columns and walls of the beautiful palaces once inhabited by the fairy race when they were the gods of the earth; and

this tradition of a buried town beneath the waves has been prevalent for centuries amongst the people.

Giraldus Cambrensis states, that in his time the tops of towers, "built after the fashion of the country," were distinctly visible in calm, clear weather, under the surface of the lake; and still the fairies haunt the ruins of their former splendour, and hold festivals beneath the waters when the full moon is shining; for the boatmen, coming home late at night, have often heard sweet music rising up from beneath the waves and the sound of laughter, and seen glimmering lights far down under the water, where the ancient fairy palaces are supposed to be.

The Doctor and the Fairy Princess.

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Late one night, so the story goes, a great doctor, who lived near Lough Neagh, was awoke by the sound of a carriage driving up to his door, followed by a loud ring. Hastily throwing on his clothes, the doctor ran down, when he saw a little sprite of a page standing at the carriage door, and a grand gentleman inside.

"Oh, doctor, make haste and come with me," exclaimed the gentleman. "Lose no time, for a great lady has been taken ill, and she will have no one to attend her but you. So come along with me at once in the carriage."

On this the doctor ran up again to finish his dressing, and to put up all that might be wanted, and was down again in a moment.

"Now quick," said the gentleman, "you are an excellent good fellow. Sit down here beside me, and do not be alarmed at anything you may see."

So on they drove like mad—and when they came to the ferry, the doctor thought they would wake up the ferryman

and take the boat; but no, in they plunged, carriage and horses, and all, and were at the other side in no time without a drop of water touching them.

Now the doctor began to suspect the company he was in; but he held his peace, and they went on up Shane's Hill, till they stopped at a long, low, black house, which they entered, and passed along a narrow dark passage, groping their way, till, all at once, a bright light lit up the walls, and some attendants having opened a door, the doctor found himself in a gorgeous chamber all hung with silk and gold; and on a silken couch lay a beautiful lady, who exclaimed with the most friendly greeting—

"Oh, doctor, I am so glad to see you. How good of you to come."

"Many thanks, my lady," said the doctor, "I am at your ladyship's service."

And he stayed with her till a male child was born; but when he looked round there was no nurse, so he wrapped it in swaddling clothes and laid it by the mother.

"Now," said the lady, "mind what I tell you. They will try to put a spell on you to keep you here; but take my advice, eat no food and drink no wine, and you will be safe; and mind, also, that you express no surprise at anything you see; and take no more than five golden guineas, though you may be offered fifty or a hundred, as your fee.

"Thank you, madam," said the doctor, "I shall obey you in all things."

With this the gentleman came into the room, grand and noble as a prince, and then he took up the child, looked at it and laid it again on the bed.

Now there was a large fire in the room, and the gentleman took the fire shovel and drew all the burning coal to the front, leaving a great space at the back of the grate; then he took up the child again and laid it in the hollow at the back of the fire and drew all the coal over it till it was covered; but, mindful of the lady's advice, the doctor said never a word. Then the room suddenly changed to another still more beautiful, where a grand feast was laid out, of all sorts of meats and fair fruits and bright red wine in cups of sparkling crystal.

"Now, doctor," said the gentleman, "sit down with us and take what best pleases you."

"Sir," said the doctor, "I have made a vow neither to eat nor drink till I reach my home again. So please let me return without further delay."

"Certainly," said the gentleman, "but first let me pay you for your trouble," and he laid down a bag of gold on the table and poured out a quantity of bright pieces.

"I shall only take what is my right and no more," said the doctor, and he drew over five golden guineas, and placed them in his purse. "And now, may I have the carriage to convey me back, for it is growing late?"

On this the gentleman laughed. "You have been learning secrets from my lady," he said. "However, you have behaved right well, and you shall be brought back safely."

So the carriage came, and the doctor took his cane, and was carried back as the first time through the water—horses, carriage, and all—and so on till he reached his home all right just before daybreak. But when he opened his purse to take out the golden guineas, there he saw a splendid

diamond ring along with them in the purse worth a king's ransom, and when he examined it he found the two letters of his own name carved inside. So he knew it was meant for him, a present from the fairy prince himself.

All this happened a hundred years ago, but the ring still remains in the doctor's family, handed down from father to son, and it is remarked, that whoever wears it as the owner for the time has good luck and honour and wealth all the days of his life.

"And by the light that shines, this story is true," added the narrator of the tale, using the strong form of asseveration by which the Irish-speaking peasants emphasize the truth of their words.

A Holy Well.

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On the north side of Lough Neagh there is still a holy well of great power and sanctity. Three ancient white-thorn trees overshadow it, and about a mile distant is the fragmentary ruin of a wooden cross, erected in the olden time to mark the limit of the sacred ground.

It was the custom up to a recent date for the pilgrims to go round this well thirteen times barefoot on the 27th of June, drink of the water, wash in it, and then, holding themselves freed from all past sin, return to the old worldly life, and begin again after the usual fashion the old routine of business or pleasure, or reckless folly, conscious that they could come once more the following year and clear off all the accumulated stains of an ill life by a lavation in the holy well.

A number of yellow crystals are found near, which the people say grow in the rocks in one night upon Midsummer Eve. And these crystals have power to avert all evil and bring luck and blessing to a house and family, and certain words are said while gathering them, known only to the adepts. The crystals are, however, very plentiful, and are

found scattered for a space of two miles round the well, and in the crannies of the rocks. When burned in a crucible they become pure lime in one hour, and the powder ferments with spirits of vitriol; yet the waters of the well when analyzed present no appearance of lime.

At one time an effort was made to change the name of Lough Neagh to Lough Chichester, in honour of the Lord Deputy, Sir Arthur Chichester, but the Irish would not accept the new baptism, and the old name still remains unchanged.

A Sacred Island.

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At Toome Island there is the ruin of an ancient church, where the dead walk on November Eve. It is a solemn and sacred place, and nothing is allowed to be taken from it; neither stone nor branch of the shadowing trees, for fear of angering the spirits. One day three men who were on the island cut down some branches of an elder-tree that grew there to repair a private still, and carried them off in their boat; but when just close to the shore a violent gust of wind upset the boat, and the men were drowned. The wood, however, floated back to the island, and a cross was made of it which was erected on the beach, to commemorate the fate of the doomed men.

It is recorded, also, that a certain stone having been taken away by some masons from the ancient ruin, to build into the wall of the parish church, which they were erecting in the place, the water in the town well suddenly began to diminish, and at last dried up, to the great consternation and terror of the inhabitants, who were at their wits' end to know the cause; when luckily an old woman of the place dreamed a dream about the abduction of the stone, which gave the solution of the mystery.

At once the people took the matter into their own hands, and they went in a body and cast down the wall till they came on the stone, which was then placed in a boat, and carried back with solemn ceremonial to the island, where it was replaced in its original site, and, immediately after, the water flowed back again into the well, and the supply became even more copious than ever.

The Lake of Revenge.

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Near the great mountain of Croagh-Patrick there is a lake called *Clonvencagh*, or the Lake of Revenge, to which evil-disposed persons used to resort in order to imprecate maledictions on their enemies. It was the custom also to erect monuments round the well by placing on end a long flagstone, and heaping round it a pyramid of sand in order to keep it fixed firmly in its place. Over these pillar-stones certain mystic rites were then performed by the pilgrims, and prayers were said which took the form of the most terrible imprecations. It was therefore with awe and terror that one man said of another, "He has been cursed by the stone."

Scenes at a Holy Well.

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Scenes of holy faith, of tender love, and human pity are, however, happily more frequent amongst the devotees at the holy wells of Ireland than the fierce mutterings of malediction. At these sacred places may be seen the mother praying for her child, the girl for her lover, the wife for her husband; going the rounds on their bare knees, with the crucifix in their clasped hands and their eyes raised to heaven in silent prayer, with a divine faith that this prayer will be answered; and who can say but that the fervour of the supplication has often brought down the blessing of healing for the sick, or comfort for the sorrowing? The picturesque grouping round the holy well, the background of purple mountains, the antique stone cross at which the pilgrims kneel, the costumes and often the beautiful faces of the praying women, with their long dark hair and purple Irish eyes, form a scene of wonderful poetic and dramatic interest, which has been immortalized by Sir Frederick Burton in his great national picture, *The Blind Girl at the Holy Well*—a work that at once made the young painter famous, and laid the foundation of the subsequent career of this distinguished and perfect artist.

Lough Foyle.

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Lough Foyle means the borrowed lake, for in old times there were two weird sisters dwelling beyond the Shannon, who were skilled in necromancy. And the elder sister said to the younger—

"Give me the loan of your silver lake, for I have none; and I promise to restore it to you next Monday."

So the younger, being good-natured, rolled up the lake in a sheet and despatched it over hills and dales to her sister. But when the time came for return, the elder sister, being deceitful and cunning, made answer to the messenger sent for it—

"Truly, I said Monday, but I meant the Day of Judgment. So I shall keep the lake till then."

And the lake therefore remains in her country to this day, while the great hollow whence it was taken can still be seen in Connaught, bare and barren, waiting for the waters that never will return.

The Hen's Castle.

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At the head of Lough Corrib, deep in the water about a gunshot from the land, stands the ancient castle of *Caisleen-na-Cearca*, said to have been built in one night by a cock and a hen, but in reality it was founded by the ill-fated Roderick O'Connor, the last king of Ireland. Strange lights are sometimes seen flitting through it, and on some particular midnight a crowd of boats gather round it, filled with men dressed in green with red sashes. And they row about till the cock crows, when they suddenly vanish and the cries of children are heard in the air. Then the people know that there has been a death somewhere in the region, and that the Sidhe have been stealing the young mortal children, and leaving some ill-favoured brat in the cradle in place of the true child.

The old castle has many historic memories; the celebrated *Graina Uaile*, the great chieftainess of the West, made it her abode for some time, and carried thither the young heir of Howth, whom she had abducted from Howth Castle, when on one of her piratical expeditions. Afterwards, during the Wars of Elizabeth, a distinguished lady

of the sept of the O'Flaherties, Bevinda O'Flahertie, shut herself up there with her only daughter and heiress, and a following of twenty resolute men. But further to ensure her safety, she wrote to the Queen, requesting permission to arm the guard; Queen Elizabeth in return sent an autograph letter granting the request, but addressed to "her good friend, Captain Bevan O'Flahertie," evidently thinking that the custodian of such a castle must certainly be a man.

In the solemn solitude of this picturesque and stately *Caisleen-na-Cearca*, the great lake fortress of Lough Corrib, with its rampart of purple mountains and its water pathway fifty miles long, the young heiress grew up tall and beautiful, the pride of the west. And in due time she married Blake of Menlo Castle. And from this historic pair is descended the present baronet and owner of the property, Sir John Blake of Menlo.

Cromwell ruthlessly dismantled the castle, and it has remained a ruin ever since; but the massive walls, and the beautiful twelfth century ornamentation of doors and windows still attest the ancient grandeur of the edifice, before "the curse of Cromwell" fell upon it, and upon the country and on the people of Ireland.

Sliabh-Mish, County Kerry.

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Every one knows that Sliabh-Mish, County Kerry, is haunted. The figure of a man, accompanied by a huge black dog, is frequently seen standing on a high crag, but as the traveller approaches, the forms disappear, although they rise up again before him on another crag, and so continue appearing and disappearing as he journeys on. Many travellers have seen them, but no one has ever yet been able to meet the man and the dog face to face on the mountain side, for they seem to melt away in the mist, and are seen no more on reaching the spot. It happened, once upon a time, that a man journeying alone over the mountain path, took out his snuff-box to solace himself with a pinch, and was putting it up again in his waistcoat pocket, when he heard a voice near him saying, "Not yet! not yet! I am near you, wait."

He looked round, but not a soul was to be seen. However, he thought it right to be friendly, so he shook some snuff from the box in the palm of his hand and held it out in the air. But his hair stood on end, and he trembled with fright, when he felt invisible fingers on his hand picking up the snuff, and when he drew it back the snuff had disappeared.

"God and the saints between us and heaven!" exclaimed the poor man, ready to drop down from terror.

"Amen," responded the clear voice of some invisible speaker close beside him.

Then the man quickly made the sign of the cross over the hand touched by the spirit, and so went on his way unharmed.

The Skelligs of Kerry.

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The Skellig Rocks are situated about eleven miles from the mainland, and are considered of great sanctity. In the Middle Ages, during the penitential weeks of Lent, the monks used to leave the adjacent convent and retire to the Skelligs Rocks for silence, prayer, and abstinence. Several ancient stone-roofed cells are still in existence at the top of the rock, showing where they dwelt. These cells are of the most ancient cyclopean order of building known in Ireland, and are far older than the church near them, which does not date earlier than the seventh century.

Certainly no place more awful in its loneliness and desolation could be imagined than the summit of the bleak rock, reached only by a narrow way, almost inaccessible, even to those accustomed to climb precipitous paths, but which makes the ordinary traveller giddy with fear and dread.

As marriages were not allowed in Lent, it became a custom for the young people of both sexes to make a pilgrimage to the Skellig Rocks during the last Lenten week. A procession was formed of the young girls and bachelors, and tar-barrels were lighted to guide them on the dangerous

paths. The idea was to spend the week in prayer, penance, and lamentation; the girls praying for good husbands, the bachelors repenting of their sins. But the proceedings gradually degenerated into such a mad carnival of dancing, drinking, and fun, that the priests denounced the pilgrimage, and forbade the annual migration to the Skelligs. Still the practice was continued until the police had orders to clear the rocks. Thus ended the ancient custom of "going to the Skelligs;" for the mayor having pronounced judgment over the usage as "subversive of all morality and decorum," it was entirely discontinued; and the wild fun and frolic of the Skelligs is now but a tradition preserved in the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

POPULAR NOTIONS CONCERNING THE SIDHE RACE.

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FROM the earliest ages the world has believed in the existance of a race midway between the angel and man, gifted with power to exercise a strange mysterious influence over human destiny. The Persians called this mystic race Peris; the Egyptians and the Greeks named them demons, not as evil, but as mysterious allies of man, invisible though ever present; capable of kind acts but implacable if offended.

The Irish called them the Sidhe, or spirit-race, or the *Feadh-Ree*, a modification of the word Peri. Their country is the *Tir-na-oge*, the land of perpetual youth, where they live a life of joy and beauty, never knowing disease or death, which is not to come on them till the judgment day, when they are fated to pass into annihilation, to perish utterly and be seen no more. They can assume any form, and they make horses out of bits of straw, on which they ride over the country, and to Scotland and back. They have no religion, but a great dread of the *Scapular* (Latin words from the Gospels written by a priest and hung round the neck). Their power is great over unbaptized children, and

such generally grow up evil and have the evil eye, and bring ill luck, unless the name of God is instantly invoked when they look at any one fixedly and in silence.

All over Ireland the fairies have the reputation of being very beautiful, with long yellow hair sweeping the ground, and lithe light forms. They love milk and honey, and sip the nectar from the cups of the flowers, which is their fairy wine.

Underneath the lakes, and deep down in the heart of the hills, they have their fairy palaces of pearl and gold, where they live in splendour and luxury, with music and song and dancing and laughter and all joyous things as befits the gods of the earth. If our eyes were touched by a fairy salve we could see them dancing on the hill in the moonlight. They are served on vessels of gold, and each fairy chief, to mark his rank, wears a circlet of gold round his head.

The Sidhe race were once angels in heaven, but were cast out as a punishment for their pride. Some fell to earth, others were cast into the sea, while many were seized by demons and carried down to hell, whence they issue as evil spirits, to tempt men to destruction under various disguises; chiefly, however, as beautiful young maidens, endowed with the power of song and gifted with the most enchanting wiles. Under the influence of these beautiful sirens a man will commit any and every crime. Then when his soul is utterly black they carry him down to hell, where he remains for ever tortured by the demons to whom he sold himself.

The fairies are very numerous, more numerous than the human race. In their palaces underneath the hills and in the lakes and the sea they hide away much treasure. All

the treasure of wrecked ships is theirs; and all the gold that men have hidden and buried in the earth when danger was on them, and then died and left no sign of the place to their descendants. And all the gold of the mine and the jewels of the rocks belong to them; and in the Sifra, or fairy-house, the walls are silver and the pavement is gold, and the banquet-hall is lit by the glitter of the diamonds that stud the rocks.

If you walk nine times round a fairy rath at the full of the moon, you will find the entrance to the Sifra; but if you enter, beware of eating the fairy food or drinking the fairy wine. The Sidhe will, indeed, wile and draw many a young man into the fairy dance, for the fairy women are beautiful, so beautiful that a man's eyes grow dazzled who looks on them, with their long hair floating like the ripe golden corn and their robes of silver gossamer; they have perfect forms, and their dancing is beyond all expression graceful; but if a man is tempted to kiss a *Sigh-oge*, or young fairy spirit, in the dance, he is lost for ever—the madness of love will fall on him, and he will never again be able to return to earth or to leave the enchanted fairy palace. He is dead to his kindred and race for ever more.

On Fridays the fairies have special power over all things, and chiefly on that day they select and carry off the young mortal girls as brides for the fairy chiefs. But after seven years, when the girls grow old and ugly, they send them back to their kindred, giving them, however, as compensation, a knowledge of herbs and philtres and secret spells, by which they can kill or cure, and have power over men both for good and evil.

It is in this way the wise women and fairy doctors have acquired their knowledge of the mysteries and the magic of herbs. But the fairies do not always keep the mortal women in a seven years' bondage. They sometimes only take away young girls for a dance in the moonlight, and then leave them back in their own home lulled in a sweet sleep. But the vision of the night was so beautiful that the young girls long to dream again and be made happy with the soft enchantments of the music and dance.

The fairies are passionately fond of music; it is therefore dangerous for a young girl to sing when she is all alone by the lake, for the spirits will draw her down to them to sing to them in the fairy palace under the waves, and her people will see her no more. Yet sometimes when the moonlight is on the water, and the waves break against the crystal columns of the fairy palace far down in the depths, they can hear her voice, and they know that she is singing to the fairies in the spirit land beneath the waters of the lake.

There was a girl in one of the villages that could see things no one else saw, and hear music no one else heard, for the fairies loved her and used to carry her away by night in a dream to dance with the fairy chiefs and princes. But, above all, she was loved by Finvarra the king, and used to dance with him all night till sunrise though her form seemed to be lying asleep on the bed.

One day she told some of her young companions that she was going that night to a great fairy dance on the rath, and if they chose she would bring them and put a salve on their eyes so that they would see wonders.

The young girls went with her, and on coming to the rath she said—

"Now put your foot on my foot and look over my left shoulder, and you will see the king and queen and all the beautiful lords and ladies with gold bands round their heads dancing on the grass. But take care when you see them to make no sign of the cross, nor speak the name of God, or they will vanish away, and perhaps even your life would be in danger."

On hearing this the girls ran away in fear and terror without ever using the spell or seeing the fairies. But the other remained, and told her friends next day that she had danced all night to the fairy music, and had heard the sweetest singing, so that she longed to go back and live for ever with the spirits on the hill.

And her wish was granted, for she died soon after, and on the night of her death soft music was heard floating round the house, though no one was visible. And it was said also that beautiful flowers grew on her grave, though no hand planted them there, and shadowy forms used to gather in the moonlight and sing a low chant over the place where she was laid.

The fairies can assume all forms when they have special ends in view, such as to carry off a handsome girl to Fairy-land. For this purpose they sometimes appear at the village festivities as tall, dark, noble-looking gentlemen, and they wile away the young girls as partners in the dance by their grand air and the grace of their dancing. And ever after the young girl who has danced with them moves and dances with a special fairy grace, though sometimes she

pines away and seems to die, but every one knows that her soul has been carried off to the *Tir-na-oge*, where she will be made the bride of the fairy king and live in luxury and splendour evermore.

Yet, though the fairies are fond of pleasure, they are very temperate in their mode of living, and are besides honest in their dealings and faithful to their promises. If they borrow wine from the gentry they always repay it in blessings, and never indulge much in eating or drinking. No one ever saw an intoxicated fairy, but they have no objection to offer to mortals the subtle red wine at the fairy banquets, which lulls the soul to sleep and makes the reason powerless. The young men that they beguile into their fairy palaces become their bond-slaves, and are set to hard tasks. One man said he had marched with Finvarra's men all the way from Mayo to Cork, but there they had to leave him as they were going to Spain and could not take him across the sea on their white horses.

They also much desire the aid of a powerful mortal hand to assist them in their fairy wars, for they have often disputes and battles amongst themselves for the possession of some coveted rath or dancing ground.

Once a fairy prince came to a great chieftain of Connaught, one of the Kirwans, and begged for aid against a hostile fairy tribe that had invaded his territories. The required aid being given, the fairies and their mortal auxiliaries plunged into the lake and fought the enemy and conquered; after which the Connaught men returned to shore laden with rich presents of silver and gold and crystal wine-cups as the expression of gratitude from the fairy prince.

It is said that Kirwan of Castle Hackett, the great Connaught chief, also received a beautiful fairy bride on that occasion, and it is certain that all the female descendants of the family are noted for their beauty, their grace in dancing, and their sweet voices in speaking. Lady Cloncurry, mother of the present Lord Cloncurry, was of this race, and in her youth was the acknowledged leading beauty of the Irish Court and celebrated for the rare fascination of her manner and voice.

THE HURLING MATCH.

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THE fairies, with their true artistic love of all the gentle graces of life, greatly dislike coarse and violent gestures, and all athletic sports, such as hurling and wrestling; and they often try to put an end to them by some evil turn.

One day a great cloud of dust came along the road during a hurling match and stopped the game. On this the people grew alarmed, for they said the fairies are out hunting and will do us harm by blinding us; and thousands of the Sidhe swept by, raising a terrific dust, though no mortal eye could see them.

Then one man, a good player and musician, ran for his fiddle and began to play some vigorous dance tunes, "for now," said he, "the fairies will begin to dance and forget us, and they will be off in no time to hold a revel on the rath to the music of their own fairy pipes."

And so it was, for at once the whirlwind of dust swept on to the hill of the fairy rath, and the hurling ground was left clear for the game to go on again in safety.

It must be acknowledged that the fairies are a little selfish, or they would not have interfered with the great

national sport of hurling, which is the favourite amusement of the country, and used to be held as a high festival, and arranged with all the ceremonial of a tournament; at least before the bad times destroyed all the fun and frolic of the peasant life.

The prettiest girl of the village was chosen as the hurling girl—the *Colleen-a-bhailia.* Dressed in white, and accompanied by her maidens, she proceeded to the hurling ground, the piper and fiddlers going before her playing gay dance tunes.

There she was met by the procession of the young men surrounding the chief hurler—always a stalwart youth of over six feet. And the youth and the maiden joined hands and began the dance—all the people cheering.

This was called the opening of the hurling. And for the next match another pair would be selected, each village girl anxiously hoping to be the *Colleen-a-bhailia* chosen to lead the ceremonial dance for the second or following games. Naturally the hurling tournament ended with a festive supper, much love-making, and many subsequent marriages between the pretty colleens and stalwart young hurlers, despite all the envy and jealousy of the fairies, who maliciously tried to mar the pleasures of the festival.

THE RIDE WITH THE FAIRIES.

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THE fairies take great delight in horsemanship, and are splendid riders. Many fine young men are enticed to ride with them, when they dash along with the fairies like the wind, Finvarra himself leading, on his great black horse with the red nostrils, that look like flames of fire. And ever after the young men are the most fearless riders in the country, so the people know at once that they have hunted with the fairies. And after the hunt some favourite of the party is taken to a magnificent supper in the fairy palace, and when he has drank of the bright red wine they lull him to sleep with soft music. But never again can he find the fairy palace, and he looks in vain for the handsome horseman on his fine black steed, with all the gay young huntsmen in their green velvet dresses, who rushed over the field with him, like a flash of the storm wind. They have passed away for ever from his vision, like a dream of the night.

Once on a time a gentleman, also one of the Kirwans of Galway, was riding by the fairy hill—where all the fairies of the West hold their councils and meetings, under the rule of Finvarra the king—when a strange horseman,

mounted on a fiery black steed, suddenly appeared. But as the stranger bid him the time of day with distinguished grace, Mr. Kirwan returned his greeting courteously, and they rode on together side by side, discoursing pleasantly —for the stranger seemed to know every one and everything, though Mr. Kirwan could not remember ever having seen him before.

"Now," said the black horseman, "I know that you are to be at the races to-morrow, so just let me give you a hint: if you wish to be certain of winning, allow me to send you my man to ride your horse. He never failed in a race yet, and he shall be with you early, before the start."

With that, at a turn of the road, the stranger disappeared; for he was no other than Finvarra himself, who had a friendly liking for the tribe of the Kirwans, because all the men were generous who came of the blood, and all the women handsome.

Next morning, as Mr. Kirwan was setting out for the race, his groom told him that a young jockey was waiting to see him. He was the strangest looking little imp, Mr. Kirwan thought, he had ever set eyes on, but he felt compelled to give him all the rights and power that was necessary for the race, and the young imp was off in a moment, like a flash of lightning.

Mr. Kirwan knew no more—he seemed like one in a dream—till the silver cup was handed to him as winner of the race, and congratulations poured down on him, and every one asked eagerly where he got the wonderful jockey who seemed to make the horse fly like the spirit

of the wind itself. But the jockey by this time had disappeared. However, the stranger on the black horse was there, and he constrained Mr. Kirwan to come with him to dinner; and they rode on pleasantly, as before, till they reached a grand, beautiful house, with a crowd of gorgeous servants waiting on the steps to receive the lord and master and his guest.

One of them led Mr. Kirwan to his room to dress for dinner, and there he found a costly suit of violet velvet ready, in which the valet arrayed him. Then he entered the dining-hall. It was all lit up splendidly, and there were garlands of flowers twining round crystal columns, and golden cups set with jewels for the wine, and golden dishes.

The host seemed an accomplished man of the world, and did the honours with perfect grace. Conversation flowed freely, while soft music was heard at intervals from invisible players, and Mr. Kirwan could not resist the charm and beauty of the scene, nor the bright red wine that his host poured out for him into the jewelled cups.

Then, when the banquet was over, a great crowd of ladies and gentlemen came in and danced to sweet low music, and they circled round the guest and tried to draw him into the dance. But when he looked at them it seemed to him that they were all the dead he had once known; for his own brother was there, that had been drowned in the lake a year before; and a man who had been killed by a fall when hunting; and others whose faces he knew well. And they were all pale as death, but their eyes burned like coals of fire.

And as he looked and wondered, a lovely lady came over to him, wearing a necklace of pearls. And she clasped his wrist with her little hand, and tried to draw him into the circle.

"Dance with me," she whispered, "dance with me again. Look at me, for you once loved me."

And when he looked at her he knew that she was dead, and the clasp of her hand was like a ring of fire round his wrist; and he drew back in terror, for he saw that she was the beautiful girl he had loved in his youth, and to whom he had given a necklace of pearls, but who died before he could make her his bride.

Then his heart sank with fear and dread, and he said to his host—

"Take me from this place. I know the dancers; they are dead. Why have you brought them up from their graves?"

But the host only laughed and said, "You must take more wine to keep up your courage." And he poured him out a goblet of wine redder than rubies.

And when he drank it, all the pageant and the music and the crowd faded away from before his eyes, and he fell into a profound sleep, and knew no more till he found himself at home, laid on his bed. And the servant told him that a strange horseman had accompanied him to the door late in the night, who had charged them to lay the master gently in his bed and by no means to awake him till noon next day, for he was weary after the race; and he bade them take the hunter to the stables and tend him carefully, for the animal was covered with foam, and all trembling.

At noon Mr. Kirwan awoke, and rose up as well as ever; but of all the fairy revels nothing remained to him but the mark round his wrist of the clasp of a woman's hand, that seemed burned into his flesh.

So he knew the night's adventure was no mere dream of the fancy, and the mark of the dead hand remained with him to his last hour, and the form of the young girl with her necklace of pearls often came before him in a vision of the night; but he never again visited the fairy palace, and never saw the dark horseman any more. As to the silver cup, he flung it into the lake, for he thought it had come to him by devil's magic and would bring no good luck to him or to his race. So it sank beneath the waves, and the silver cup was seen no more.

THE FAIRY SPY.

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SOMETIMES the fairies appear like old men and women, and thus gain admission to houses that they may watch and spy, and bewitch the butter, and abduct the children, and carry off the young girls for fairy brides.

There was a man in the west who was bedridden for seven years, and could do no work and had to be lifted by others when he moved. Yet the amount of food he consumed was enormous, and as every one pitied him, people were constantly bringing him all sorts of good things; and he ate up everything but grew no stronger.

Now on Sundays when the family went to mass, they locked him up, but left him plenty of food, for there was no one in the house to help him. One Sunday, however, they left chapel earlier than usual, and as they were going by the shore they saw a great crowd of strangers hurling, and in the midst of them, hurling and running and leaping, was the sick man, as well and jolly as ever a man could be. They called out to him, on which he turned round to face them, but that instant he disappeared.

So the family hastened home, unlocked the door, and

went straight up to the room, where they found the man in bed as usual, thin and weak and unable to move; but he had eaten up all the food and was now crying out for more. On this the family grew very angry and cried, "You have been deceiving us. You are in league with the witch-folk; but we'll soon see what you really are, for if you don't get up out of that bed at once, we'll make down a fire and lay you on it, and make you walk."

Then he cried and roared; but they seized him to drag him to the fire. So when he saw they were in earnest he jumped up and rushed to the door, and before they could touch him he had disappeared, and was seen no more.

Now, indeed, they knew that he was in league with the devil, and they burned his bed and everything belonging to him, and poured holy water on the room. And when all was burned, nothing remained but a black stone with strange signs on it. And by this, no doubt, he performed his enchantments. And the people were afraid of it and gave it to the priest, who has it to this day, so there can be no doubt as to the truth of the story.

And the priest knows the hidden meaning of the strange signs which give power to the stone; but will reveal the secret to no one, lest the people might try to work devil's magic with it, and unlawful spells by the power of the stone and the power of the signs.

THE DARK HORSEMAN.

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ONE day a fine, handsome young fellow, called Jemmy Nowlan, set off to walk to the fair at Slane, whither some cattle of his had been sent off for sale that same morning early. And he was dressed in his best clothes, spruce and neat; and not one in all the county round could equal Jemmy Nowlan for height, strength, or good looks. So he went along quite gay and merry in himself, till he came to a lonely bit of the road where never a soul was to be seen; but just then the sky became black-dark, as if thunder were in the air, and suddenly he heard the tramp of a horse behind him. On turning round he saw a very dark, elegant looking gentleman, mounted on a black horse, riding swiftly towards him.

"Jemmy Nowlan," said the dark horseman, "I have been looking for you all along the road. Get up now, quickly, behind me, and I'll carry you in no time to the great fair of Slane; for, indeed, I am going there myself, and it would be very pleasant to have your company."

"Thank your honour kindly," said Jemmy; "but it's not for the likes of me to ride with your lordship; so I would

rather walk, if it's pleasing to your honour; but thanks all the same."

Truth to tell, Jemmy in his own mind had a fear of the strange gentleman and his black horse, and distrusted them both, for had he not heard the people tell strange stories of how young men had been carried off by the fairies, and held prisoners by their enchantments down deep in the heart of the hill under the earth, where never a mortal could see them again or know their fate; and they were only allowed to come up and see their kindred on the nights the dead walked, and then they walked with them as they rose from the graves? So again he began to make his excuses, and meanwhile kept looking round for some path by which he could escape if possible.

"Come now," said the dark horseman, "this is all nonsense, Jemmy Nowlan; you really must come with me."

And with that he stooped down and touched him lightly on the shoulder with his whip, and in an instant Jemmy found himself seated on the horse, and galloping away like the wind with the dark horseman; and they never stopped nor stayed till they came to a great castle in a wood, where a whole set of servants in green and gold were waiting on the steps to receive them. And they were the smallest people Jemmy had ever seen in his life; but he made no remark, for they were very civil, and crowded round to know what they could do for him.

"Take him to a room and let him dress," said the gentleman, who appeared to own the castle. And in the room Jemmy found a beautiful suit of velvet, and a cap and feather. And when the little servants had dressed him

they led him to the large hall that was all lit up and hung with garlands of flowers; and music and dancing were going on, and many lovely ladies were present, but not one in the hall was handsomer than Jemmy Nowlan in his velvet suit and cap and feather.

"Will you dance with me, Jemmy Nowlan?" said one lovely lady.

"No, Jemmy; you must dance with me," said another.

And they all fought for him, so he danced with them all, one after the other, the whole night through, till he was dead tired and longed to lie down and sleep.

"Take Jemmy Nowlan to his room, and put him to bed," said the gentleman to a red-haired man; "but first he must tell me a story."

"I have no story, your honour," said Jemmy, "for I am not book-learned; but I am very tired, let me lie down and sleep."

"Sleep, indeed," said the gentleman; "not if I can help it. Here, Davy"—and he called the red-haired man—"take Jemmy Nowlan and put him out; he can tell no story. I will have no one here who can't tell me a story. Put him out, he is not worth his supper."

So the red-haired man thrust Jemmy out at the castle gate, and he was just settling himself to sleep on a bench outside, when three men came by bearing a coffin.

"Oho, Jemmy Nowlan," they said, "you are welcome. We just wanted a fourth man to carry the coffin."

And they made him get under it with them, and away they marched over hedge and ditch, and field and bog, through briars and thorns, till they reached the old churchyard in the valley, and then they stopped.

"Who will dig a grave?" said one.

"Let us draw lots," said another.

And the lot fell on Jemmy. So they gave him a spade, and he worked and worked till the grave was dug broad and deep.

"This is not the right place at all for a grave," said the leader of the party when the grave was finished. "I'll have no one buried in this spot, for the bones of my father rest here."

So they had to take up the coffin again, and carry it on over field and bog till they reached another churchyard, where Jemmy was obliged to dig a second grave; and when it was finished, the leader cried out—

"Who shall we place in the coffin?"

And another voice answered—

"We need draw no lots; lay Jemmy Nowlan in the coffin!"

And the men seized hold of him and tried to cast him to the ground. But Jemmy was strong and powerful, and fought them all. Still they would not let go their hold, though he dealt them such blows as would have killed any other men. And at last he felt faint, for he had no weapon to fight with, and his strength was going.

Then he saw that the leader carried a hazel switch in his hand, and he knew that a hazel switch brought luck; so he made a sudden spring and seized it, and whirled it three times round his head, and struck right and left at his assailants, when a strange and wondrous thing happened; for the three men who were ready to kill him, fell down at once to the ground, and remained there still as the dead.

And the coffin stood white in the moonlight by itself, and no hand touched it, and no voice spoke.

But Jemmy never waited to look or think, for the fear of the men was on him, lest they should rise up again; so he fled away, still holding the hazel twig in his hand, and ran on over field and bog, through briars and thorns, till he found himself again at the castle gate. Then all the grand servants came out, and the little men, and they said—

"You are welcome, Jemmy Nowlan. Come in; his lordship is waiting for you."

And they brought him to a room where the lord was lying on a velvet couch, and he said—

"Now, young man, tell me a story, for no one in my castle is allowed to eat, drink, or sleep till they have related something wonderful that has happened to them."

"Then, my lord," said Jemmy, "I can tell you the most wonderful of stories; and very proud I am to be able to amuse your lordship."

So he told him the story of the three men and the coffin, and the lord was so pleased that he ordered the servants to bring the youth a fine supper, and the best of wine, and Jemmy ate like a prince from gold dishes, and drank from crystal cups of the wine, and had the best of everything; but after the supper he felt rather queer and dazed-like, and fell down on the ground asleep like one dead.

After that he knew nothing till he awoke next morning, and found himself lying under a haystack in his own field, and all his beautiful clothes were gone—the velvet suit and cap and feather that he had looked so handsome in at the dance, when all the fine ladies fell in love with him. Nothing

was left to him of all the night's adventure save the hazel twig, which he still held firmly in his hand.

And a very sad and down-hearted man was Jemmy Nowlan that day, especially when the herd came to tell him that none of the cattle were sold at the fair, for the men were waiting for the master, and wondering why he did not come to look after his money, while all the other farmers were selling their stock at the finest prices.

And Jemmy Nowlan has never yet made out why the fairies played him such a malicious and ill turn as to prevent him selling his cattle. But if ever again he meets that dark stranger on the black horse, he is determined to try the strength of his shillelagh on his head, were he ever such a grand man among the fairies. For at least he might have left him the velvet suit; and it was a shabby thing to take it away just when he couldn't help himself, and had fallen down from fair weakness and exhaustion after all the dancing and the wine he drank at supper, when the lovely ladies poured it out for him with their little hands covered with jewels.

It was truly a bad and a shabby trick, as Jemmy said to himself that May morning, when he stood up from under the hay-rick; and just shows us never to trust the fairies, for with all their sweet words and pleasant ways and bright red wine, they are full of malice and envy and deceit, and are always ready to ruin a poor fellow and then laugh at him, just for fun, and for the spite and jealousy they have against the human race.

SHEELA-NA-SKEAN.

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THERE is an old ruin of a farmhouse in the County Cork, near Fermoy, that has an evil reputation, and no one would build it up or inhabit it.

Years and years ago a rich old farmer lived there, who was reputed to have hoards of gold hid away in his sleeping-room. Some said he never slept without the sack of gold being laid under his pillow. However, one night he was found cruelly murdered, and all the gold in the house was missing, except a few pieces stained with blood, that had evidently been dropped by the murderers in their flight.

The old man at the time was living quite alone. His wife was dead, and his only son was away in a distant part of the country. But on news of the murder the son returned, and a close investigation was made. Suspicion finally fell on the housekeeper and a lover she used to bring to the house. They were arrested in consequence and brought to rial. The housekeeper, *Sheela-na-Skean*, or Sheela of the Knife, as she was called afterwards, was a dark, fierce, powerful woman, noted for her violent and vindictive temper. The lover was a weak, cowardly fellow, who at

the last turned evidence to save his life. He had taken no part, he said, in the actual murder, though he had helped Sheela to remove and bury the gold. According to his story, Sheela entered the old man's room at night, and taking a sharp, short sword that always hung at the head of his bed, she stabbed him fiercely over and over till not a breath of life was left. Then, calling her lover, they ransacked the room, and found quantities of golden guineas, which they put in a bag and carried out to the field, where they buried it in a safe spot, known only to themselves; but this place neither Sheela nor the lover would reveal unless they received a pardon.

The murder, however, was too atrocious for pardon, and Sheela was hung amid the howlings and execrations of the people. But she remained fierce and defiant to the last, still refusing obstinately to reveal the place where the money was buried.

The lover, meanwhile, had died in prison from fright, for after sentence was pronounced, he fell down in a fit, from which he never recovered. So the secret of the gold died with them.

After this the son came to live in the place; and the tradition of the hidden gold was still kept alive in the family, but all efforts to find it proved useless.

Now a strange thing happened. The farmer dreamed for three nights in succession that if he went at midnight to an old ruined castle in the neighbourhood, he would hear words that might tell him the secret of the gold; but he must go alone. So after the third dream the farmer resolved to do as he was ordered, and he went forth at midnight to the

place indicated. His two sons, grown-up young men, anxiously awaited his return. And about an hour after midnight the father came home pale as a ghost, haggard and trembling. They helped him to his bed, and after a little he was able to tell them his adventures. He said, on reaching the old ruin he leaned up straight against the wall, and waited for the promised words in silence. Then a breath seemed to pass over his face, and he heard a low voice whispering in his ear—

"If you want to find the bag of gold, take out the third stone."

"But here," said the farmer, mournfully, "the voice stopped, before the place was named where the gold lay; for at that instant a terrific screech was heard, and the ghost of Sheela appeared gigantic and terrible; her hands dripping with blood, and her eyes flaming fire; and she rushed to attack me, brandishing a short, sharp sword round her head, the very same, perhaps, with which she had committed the murder. At sight of this awful apparition I fled homeward, Sheela still pursuing me with leaps and yells till I reached the boundary of the castle grounds, when she sank into the earth and disappeared. But," continued the farmer, "I am certain, from the voice, that the bag of gold lies hid under the third stone in—— "

He could say no more, for at that instant the door of the bedroom was violently flung open, as if by a strong storm wind, the candle was blown out, and the unfortunate man was lifted from his bed by invisible hands, and dashed upon the floor with a terrible crash. In the darkness the young men could hear the groans, but they saw no one.

When the candle was relit they went over to help their father, but found he was already dead, with a black mark round his throat as if from strangulation, by a powerful hand. So the secret of the gold remained still undiscovered.

After the funeral was over, and all affairs settled, the brothers agreed that they would still search for the gold in the old ruins of the castle, undeterred by the apparition of the terrible Sheela. So on a certain midnight they set forth with spades and big sticks for defence, and proceeded to examine every third stone in the huge walls, to the height of a man from the ground, seeking some secret mark or sign by which, perhaps, the true stone might be discovered. But as they worked a thin blue light suddenly appeared at some distance in the inner court of the castle, and by it stood the ghost of their father, pointing with his outstretched hand to a certain stone in the wall. Now, they thought, that must certainly be the spot where the gold is hid; and they rushed on, but before they could reach the place, the terrible form of Sheela appeared, more awful than words could describe, clothed in white, and with a circle of flame round her head. And she seized the ghost with her gory hands, and dragged him away with horrible yells and imprecations. And far off in the darkness they could hear the fight going on, and the yells of Sheela as she pursued the ghost.

"Now," said the young men, "let us work while they are fighting;" and they worked away at the third stone from the end, where the blue light had rested—a large flat stone, but easily lifted; and when they had rolled it away from the place,

there underneath lay a huge bag of bright golden guineas. And as they raised it up from the earth a terrific unearthly din was heard in the distance, and a shrill scream rang on the air. Then a rush of the wind came by them and the blue light vanished, but they heeded nothing, only lifted the bag from the clay, and carried it away with them through the darkness and storm. And the yells seemed to pursue them till they reached the boundary of the castle grounds, then all was still; and they traversed the rest of the way in peace, and reached home safely.

From that time the ghost of *Sheela-na-Skean* ceased to haunt the castle, but lamenting and cries used sometimes to be heard at night in and around the old farmhouse: so the brothers pulled it down and left it a ruin, and built a handsome residence with some of their treasure; for now they had plenty of gold, and they lived happily and prospered ever after, with all their family and possessions. And on the spot where the gold was found they erected a cross, in memory of their father, to whom they owed all their wealth, and through whom this prosperity had come; for by him the evil spirit of *Sheela-na-Skean* was conquered at last, and the gold restored to the family of the murdered farmer.

Captain Webb, the Robber Chief.

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About a hundred years ago, a most notorious robber, called Captain Webb, used to make the County Mayo his head-quarters; and dreadful tales are still current amongst the people of his deeds of violence and cruelty.

Many beautiful young girls he carried off by force or fraud; and when he grew tired of them it was his practice to strip the unhappy victims naked, and plunge them down a deep hole near Lough Corrib, which is still known throughout the county as "Captain Webb's Hole."

One day, however, fate worked out a revenge on the audacious highwayman by the hands of a woman.

He had committed a daring robbery on the highroad—plundered a carriage, shot the horses, and carried off a noble and lovely girl, who was returning home with her mother from an entertainment, which had been given by a great lord in the vicinity. Consequently, as the robber knew, the ladies were dressed magnificently, and wore the most costly jewels. After stripping the mother of all her ornaments he left her half dead upon the highway; but wrapping a cloak round the young lady, Captain Webb

flung her on the horse before him and galloped off to one of the many hiding-places he had through the country.

For some time he gave up all his other favourites for the sake of the beautiful girl, and carried her about with him on all his wild expeditions, so great was the madness of his love for her.

But at length he grew tired even of her beauty, and resolved to get rid of her, in the same way as he had got rid of the others, by a cruel and sudden death.

So one day, when she was out riding beside him, as he always forced her to do, he brought her to the fatal hole where so many of his victims had perished, intending to cast her down headlong as he had done to so many others; but first he told her to dismount, and to take off all her rich garments of silk and gold and her jewels, for she would need them no longer.

"For pity, then," she said, "do not look on me while I undress, for it is not seemly or right to look on a woman undressing; but turn your back, and I shall unclasp my robe and fling it off."

So the captain turned his back as she desired him, for he could not refuse her last request; but still, he kept close to the edge of the hole ready to throw her in; when, suddenly she sprang upon him, and, placing both hands on his shoulders, pushed him over the edge down into the fathomless gulf, from which no mortal ever rose alive, and in this manner the country was freed for evermore from the terrible robber fiend, by the courage of a brave and beautiful girl.

THE MAYO ROBBER AND FEENISH THE MARE.

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ANOTHER desperate character that made an evil reputation in the same county was Captain Macnamara. Though a man of family and good means and of splendid appearance, he led a life of the wildest excess, and stopped at no crime so as he could gratify the passion or the caprice of the moment, or find money to spend on his pleasures, with the reckless, senseless, foolish extravagance of an evil, dissolute nature; for he had early squandered away all his own patrimony, and now only lived by fraud, lying, and insolent contempt of the rights and claims of others.

Just at the time when his finances were at the lowest, he was summoned to attend his trial at the county assizes for some malpractices concerning land and stock belonging to a wealthy widow lady, who had a fine place in the neighbourhood, though she seldom lived there, being constantly abroad, in Paris or Rome, with her only son, a young lad, the heir of the property. It happened, however, that she returned home just in time for the trial, which interested her,

as it concerned an audacious appropriation of some of her best land, from which the stock had been drawn off and sold by Macnamara. Highly indignant at the insult offered to her, the wealthy widow appeared in court resolved on vengeance; and was received by all the officials with the utmost distinction and deference. The defendant was put through a most torturing examination, in which all his evil practices were laid bare with ruthless severity. But the widow heeded nothing of the record of wicked deeds; she only saw before her a splendid stalwart man in the prime of life, with a magnificent presence, flashing eyes, and raven hair. At once she was subjugated, as if by magic, by the handsome prisoner in the dock, and calling over her counsel, she gave orders that the suit should be stopped and no damages claimed. After this, as was natural, a warm intimacy sprang up between plaintiff and defendant, which ended in a short time by the marriage of the rich widow and the spendthrift captain; the widow's only son and heir to the estate being brought home from school to live with them, for, as the captain observed, it was necessary that the boy should be early instructed in the management of the property.

One evening, however, Macnamara set a rope across a lonely part of the road which he knew the lad must pass when riding home. In consequence the horse stumbled, and threw the rider; and at night when the servants and people went out with torches to look for the young heir, he was found lying quite dead by the roadside.

The whole property now devolved to the widow, who gave up the management entirely to Macnamara; and he lost no time in making good use of the large sums of money that

came under his control, by constantly plunging into renewed courses of dissolute extravagance. How the home life went on no one knew, for little was seen of the wife while the husband carried on his orgies; but after a year had passed by, the country heard with surprise of the death of the rich widow, as she was still called—suddenly, it was said, by a fit, a stroke. She was found lying dead in her bed one morning, and the husband was in the greatest grief—this was the orthodox narrative. But strange whispers at the same time went through the neighbourhood, that round the neck of the poor dear lady was found a black mark, and many had grave suspicions of foul play, though they feared to take any measures against the captain, so great was the terror he inspired.

Meantime, he consoled himself with another wife, a young girl who had been a favourite of his long before his first wife's death. And they led a reckless life together till all the widow's money was gambled away or spent in dissolute frolics. Then he joined a wild band of sharpers and desperadoes who fought and cheated every one at the fairs and races, and were the terror of the whole country. But, especially they warred upon the Big Joyces of Connemara, who thereupon swore to be revenged.

Now the captain had a famous mare called *Feenish*, who could fly like the wind and live for days without food. And he taught her all sorts of strange tricks—to stand on her hind legs, to go in at a window and to walk upstairs; and the way the robber chief got the secret of power over men and animals was in this wise.

There was an old raven lived near him up in a big tree,

and one day Macnamara stole the eggs, took them home, boiled them and then set them back again in the nest, to see what the old bird would do. Now he saw the wisdom of the raven, for she flew off at once to a neighbouring mountain, and having found a certain stone of magic virtue carried it back in her beak to the nest. With this stone she rubbed the eggs all over, till the life came back into them; and in due time the young ravens were flying about as strong and joyous as the rest.

Macnamara having observed this process, watched his opportunity, and one day when the raven was absent, he stole the magic stone from the nest. His first trial of the power was to rub himself all over, as he had seen the raven do with the eggs; and with a very remarkable result, for he at once became possessed of marvellous gifts. He could foresee events, and force people to do his will; he knew when danger was near, and what path to take to avoid his enemies when they were on his track. Then he rubbed Feenish, the mare, all over, and instantly she became as wise as a Christian, and knew every word that was said to her.

So Macnamara, armed with all these new powers, went on with his wild wicked life, and robbed and plundered worse than ever; and the blood of many a man, besides, was on his hands.

At last the Joyce faction resolved to make an end of the audacious robber, and all the Big Joyces of Connemara gathered in force and pursued him from place to place and over bog and mountain through half the country. At one time Macnamara plunged into a bog; where Feenish lost her four shoes; then he made her swim the river at Cong after

a hard day's ride through mountain passes; but when the poor mare got to the other side she fell down dead, to the great grief of the robber chief, who had her buried on an island in Lough Corrib that still bears her name—Innis-Feenish. However, when he had laid his faithful friend in the clay, all energy forsook him, and all his good luck departed—his riches melted away, his children squandered his property, and his two sons met a violent death; finally, broken in spirit, beggared, and alone in the world, the last of his race, he found himself with nothing left of his ill-gotten gains except an old grey pony. On this animal he rode to Cork, where he took his passage in an emigrant ship to America, and sailed away from the old country, laden with the curses of all who had ever known him; and from that hour he was heard of no more. So ended the wicked career of the spendthrift and gambler and the suspected murderer of many victims.

SKETCHES OF THE IRISH PAST.

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THE BARDIC RACE.

THE magi, the Sephoe, the gymnosophists, and the Irish adepts, held much the same creed and the same dogmas with regard to the conduct of life necessary to heighten the spiritual power. They all abstained from animal food at such times as the rush of inspiration was on them and the madness of prophetic rage; and at all times they favoured solitude, living apart in the House of Learning or Bardic College, where they admitted no obtrusive intimacies with lower intellects to disturb their lofty and exalted moods of thought. The means, also, by which they obtained mastery over diseases and the minds of men, with the strange and subtle use they made of herbs, were all kept secret amongst themselves; for they held that the prying eyes of shallow unbelievers should never be suffered to intrude upon the sacred mysteries. And it is certain that the bards possessed strange and mystic powers of wisdom beyond and above all other men. It was therefore very

dangerous to offend a poet. If any one refused him a request he would take the lobe of the person's ear and grind it between his fingers, and the man would die. Yet the bards were capable of much human emotion, and were the sweet singers of sympathy when sorrow touched a household.

The following elegy from the Irish, written about two hundred years ago by the Ard-Filé, or chief poet of the tribe, has many natural, pathetic touches, and when chanted in Irish to the harp had power to melt the hearts of all the hearers to tears.

AN ELEGY.

O Boyne, once famed for battles, sports, and conflicts,
And great heroes of the race of Conn,
Art thou grey after all thy blooms?
O agèd old woman of grey-green pools,
O wretched Boyne of many tears.

Where is the glory of thy sires?
The glory of Art with the swift arrow;
Of Meiltan, with the swift-darting spears;
Of the lordly race of the O'Neil?
To thee belonged red victory,
When the Fenian wrath was kindled,
And the heroes in thousands rode to war,
And the bridles clanked on the steeds.

O river of kings and the sons of kings,
Of the swift bark and the silver fish,
I lay my blessing on thee with my tears,
For thou art the watcher by a grave—
My treasures lie in the earth at thy side—
O Boyne of many tears.

My sons lie there in their strength,
My little daughter in her beauty—
Rory, and Brian, and Rose—
These have I given against my will.
My blood, my heart, my bone and kin,
My love and my life, to the grave.

The blessing of men was on them,
The blessing of thousands that loved them,
From Kells of the Crosses to Drogheda—
Eight thousand blessings to Dowth of the Trees.
Peace be on the earth where they lie!
By the royal stream of the kings,
In the land of the great O'Neil.

The Bardic song amongst all nations was the first expression of the human soul, with all its strong, passionate emotions and heroic impulses. It is remarkable that, although several invasions of Ireland are on record, yet but one language seems to have existed there from the earliest times down to the coming of the Anglo-Normans in the twelfth century. The Bards held it as their peculiar duty to raise this language to its highest perfection, and the laws of Celtic poetry, especially, were most elaborate and the structure of the verse exceedingly difficult. Ten years of study were allowed the students at the Druids' College to gain perfection in the art, and also to practise the memory; for at the royal festivals the Ard-Filé was expected to recite fully and perfectly whatever heroic tale might be called for by the king at the banquet. On great occasions also, when the meeting was held in the open air, the chiefs sat round in a circle on mounds of turf, while the bards, standing in the centre, recited the heroic narrative to the accompaniment of the harp, the chorus joining in the lyrical portions at

intervals, and a circle of harpists at the outermost ring of the assemblage introduced occasional symphonies of pure instrumental music to give the bards time for rest between the parts of the recitation.

There were three chief measures in music in use amongst the poets—"the Sorrowful," or the chant for the dead; "the Delightful," reserved for dances and festivities; and "the Reposing," devoted entirely to love sonnets and the plaintive softness of lyrical expression. But the *Ross-Catha*, or battle-hymn, was the great war-song to which the warriors marched to battle, and which inspired them with the heroic madness that braved death for victory.

Everything connected with the bards is interesting. They were so gifted, so learned, and so beautiful. For even genius was not considered enough, without beauty, to warrant a young man being enrolled in the ranks of the poets. A noble, stately presence was indispensable, and the poet was required not only to be gifted, but to be handsome. Then he was promoted through all the grades until he reached the last and highest, called "The Wisdom of the Gods," but the knowledge then acquired by the initiated was kept sacred from the crowd, and the adept swore by the sun, the stars, and the hosts of heaven never to reveal the mysteries acquired by his initiation, to the profane.

The high-born maidens amongst the noble families were also trained by the Druids in poetry and music, and in the exercise of the chase, such as archery and throwing the lance, to give their bodies health, vigour, and beauty, while those endowed with peculiar intellect were admitted into the bardic orders, and became the priestess, prophetess, or poetess of the

tribe ; who inspired men by her eloquence and had power by her incantations over the deep mysteries of life. Such was Eodain, the chief poetess of Erin, the guide and inspirer of Eugene, the king of the South, the prophetess of her nation, who saved him and his kingdom from ruin by her wisdom, and redeemed him by her counsels from his dissolute and evil life.

The Ancient Race.

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But thousands of years ago, long before kings, bards, and Druids, with all their learning and comparative civilization, flourished in Ireland, and before the traditions of a beautiful fairy race were brought from the far East by a people accustomed to the sight of beauty, grace, and splendour, an ancient race existed in the world—a mysterious, primitive wave of human life that spread over all Europe, perhaps over all the earth, and even surged upon the shores of our own Western island; possibly a pre-Adamic race, inferior in all points, physical as well as mental, to the Adamic race that succeeded them.

They have left no name or history, yet evidences of their nature, habits, intellect, and modes of life can be scientifically deduced from the abundant strange and curious antiquarian remains to be seen in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, of which Sir William Wilde in his illustrated catalogue has given such a perfect and comprehensive description. Records of a period so remote that the use of metals even was unknown; yet these ancient records reveal the story of the rude, half-developed, early

humanity of the world in as clear a symbol to the expert and the archæologist, as if written in alphabetical letters on monoliths, like those of Babylon.

Without, therefore, being forced into shadowy theory or nebular hypothesis, we may readily construct the whole life of the primitive man, his mode of being and doing, of dressing and of eating, of living, dying, and sepulture, simply from the rude implements fashioned by his hand that cover the walls of the Academy, and are the letters in which an eternal page of human history is written.

But, this first pre-Adamic rudimental humanity was not wholly extirpated by the subsequent Adamic race. Representatives of them still remained throughout the world, and are yet existing, though these half-souled specimens of an early, inferior humanity, are gradually dying out and disappearing before the advance of the higher Adamic race, the destined lords and rulers of earth.

In Ireland the inferior primitive tribes became the bond-slaves for the higher humanity—the Tuatha-de-Dananns and Milesians that succeeded them; and specimens of this slave people can still be seen in remote districts in Ireland along the coast-line of the West, and in the secluded mountain passes. They are held in much contempt by the descendants of the nobler race, and are stigmatized even now as "the slave people," and the bondsmen of their forefathers.

It seems, then, an incontrovertible truth that the early inhabitants of Ireland, as of all Europe—in fact, the whole pre-Adamite humanity of the world—lived and died throughout how many ages we know not in a state little higher

than the animal creation, without the knowledge of even the simplest elements of civilization, which all the Adamic races possess, from their higher organization and intellect, and which they seem to have had from the date of their earliest appearance on earth.

The clothing of the primitive man was of the skins of animals fastened with thongs, or tunics made of rushes, such as were found some years ago in Spain, on the skeleton forms of pre-historic date buried in a cave of the Sierra Nevada. Their only weapons and tools were of stone, manufactured by another stone. Their ornaments were of shells and fish-bones; and their dwellings such only as instinct has suggested to all animals.

There are abundant evidences in our National Museum to prove the existence of this primary stratum of barbarism underlying all the culture of modern Europe; and we might almost hesitate to link so low a type of humanity with our own if we did not recognize in it also that characteristic instinct of man, entirely wanting in the animals—an irrepressible tendency towards progression and improvement, and, above all, to ornamentation, which is a distinctive human quality.

THE ANTIQUITIES OF IRELAND.

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WE commence the study of this early race with the first rude stone implement with which a savage man killed an animal scarcely more savage. Then, simple designs of ornamentation are discernible—the first twilight dawning of soul through matter. The rude stone implement becomes decorated, more symmetrical in form, more adapted to its uses. There is evidence of a growing sense of beauty, and heightened reasoning powers. After the introduction of metals, we trace the original stone forms reproduced first in simple unalloyed copper, afterwards in that perfect and beautiful bronze of a ruddy yellow, like gold, which no modern bronze has ever equalled. There is no violent disruption of ideas, as if the new incoming race had entirely vanquished and crushed the earlier and elder; but, on the contrary, a gradual and continuous development of the original ideas of this elder race itself, always co-working with whatever new influences may have come to it from without.

Many writers have held the belief that the first colonists of Ireland were a highly-civilized people, clothed with

Tyrian silk, fine linen of Egypt, and adorned with costly ornaments of gold. But stern facts refute this theory. The same primitive race who used only stone weapons were unacquainted with the art of weaving, and knew of no other garment than the untanned skin of the animal they killed for food. Theorists might still, however, argue, doubt, and disbelieve, if one of the ancient race had not himself risen, as it were, from the grave, after a sleep of thousands of years, to give his testimony concerning his people. In 1821 this primitive Irishman, clad completely in skins laced with thongs, was found in a peat bog, ten feet below the surface. The teeth, long dark hair and beard, were perfect. Portions of this dress have been preserved in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy. The material used in sewing was fine gut, and the regularity and closeness of the stitching are most remarkable. Specimens of the antique skin moccassins and skin caps have been also found at various times in the peat bogs, and secured for the Museum, so that we have the dress of the ancient Irishman complete.

Long after this period of barbarism, but still at a time so distant that it is anterior to all historic record, we find that the Irish had attained some knowledge of metals and the art of weaving. The Museum contains numerous highly-finished illustrations of the beautifully-formed, slender, leaf-shaped swords and daggers of bronze, which began gradually to supersede the use of the primitive celt. Many of these swords are of the pure Grecian type, formed apparently on the model of the leaf of the aloe or the agave. One sword found on an ancient battle-field is curved like

a Turkish yataghan; and in "The Book of Rights" "curved swords of battle" are frequently referred to. But the specimens of the broad scythe-shaped sword, "which is especially and peculiarly Irish," are the most numerous, as many as forty-one of these heavy, thick, round-pointed battle-axe swords being in the Museum.

The same progress of artistic development is observable in the ancient swords as was noticed in the primitive celt —as the art advanced, the manufacturer began to exercise his artistic faculties in fanciful and costly decoration. The blade was adorned with either cast or engraved ornamentation, and the hilt inlaid or studded with gold. Thus, Brian Boroimhe is described as carrying a gold-hilted sword in his right hand at the battle of Clontarf.

It is very remarkable that, throughout the whole series, from the rudest to the most highly finished, a peculiar idea is traceable in the ornamentation, by which they can at once be recognized as Irish; and this idea seems to have travelled from Irish Paganism to Irish Christianism. The ornamentation on the sepulchral stones of New Grange is repeated on the stone celts; it is carried on into the age of Bronze; it decorated the swords and spears of the kings, as well as their costly diadems and ornaments of gold, and still continued to be traced, with a kind of loving fidelity to the ancient symbols, upon the manuscripts illuminated by priestly hands, so late as the tenth and eleventh centuries.

For the illustration of the costume of the early Irish, after it passed from primitive helpless barbarism to comparative civilization, by the aid of the knowledge of metals and the art of weaving, fortunately we are not left to mere theories;

for, by a singular chance, the representative of the advanced period, like him of the barbaric age, arises also from the grave of the Past to bear witness for himself.

In 1824, a male body, completely clad in woollen antique garments, was found in a bog near Sligo, six feet below the surface; and so perfect was the body when first discovered, that a magistrate was called upon to hold an inquest on it. The garments also were in such complete preservation, that a photograph was made of a person clad in this antique suit, with the exception of the shoes, which were too small for an adult of our day, and a drawing from this photograph is one of the best and most beautifully executed illustrations of the Museum catalogue. The costume of this ancient Irish gentleman is exceedingly picturesque, consisting of trews of a plaid pattern, made wide above, like Turkish trousers, but fitting close to the leg and ankle; over them was a tunic of soft cloth, most elaborately gored and gussetted, showing high perfection in the tailoring art. The skirt of the tunic, which extends to the knee, is set on full, and measures eight feet in circumference at the bottom. The sleeves are tight, and open to the elbow, like an Albanian jacket; and over all was thrown the immemorial Irish mantle, so invariably worn, so indispensable a portion of Irish costume that it passed into a proverb among our neighbours, the Welsh, "like an Irishman for the cloak."

This graceful garment, as found upon the hero of the bog, and now visible in our Museum, is composed of brown, soft cloth, made straight on the upper edge, which is nine feet long, but cut nearly into the segment of a circle on the lower. The form resembles closely that worn by the Cala-

brian peasant at this day. These cloaks were often of great value; kings were paid tribute of them. They were made of various colours, each colour being a symbol to denote the rank of the wearer. The number of colours also in a dress had a significant value, and was regulated by law. Thus, one colour only was allowed to slaves; two for soldiers; three for goodly heroes, or young lords; six for the learned men; five for a poetess; and seven was the regal number for kings and queens.

In the "Book of Rights," the earliest accessible authority on the subject of costume prior to the Norman Invasion, we read of cloaks of various colours presented in tribute to the kings—cloaks of purple, red cloaks, green, white, black; in fact, cloaks of all colours. Some are mentioned as bordered with gold. The tunic is also described frequently, "with golden borders—with gold ornaments—with golden hems." Another form of cloak was fashioned with a hood like the Arab bornous, and was bordered with a deep fringe of goat's hairs.

Irish costume seems, in fact, to have been half-Oriental, half-Northern, like the compound race that peopled the island. The trews were the same as the Germanic *braccæ;* while the tunic was Albanian, and the mantle Eastern; as well as the high, conical head-dress, which is identical in form with the Persian cap of the present day. On this subject Sir William Wilde remarks—

"Every day's observation and research bring to light new affinities with early Irish costume. In the great French work, 'Herculaneum et Pompeii,' there is a battle scene, copied from a mosaic at Pompeii, in which the arms and

dress of the combatants are almost identical with those of ancient Ireland. The vanquished wear tight-fitting trousers, close tunics, several of which are plaided, and cloaks with the hood coming over the head precisely like the Irish cochall. The chief figures wear torques round the neck, and bracelets on the wrists, and the hood is retained in its place by a narrow frontlet, apparently of gold. The colours of the garments are also peculiarly Irish. In some, the cloak is yellow; the mantle, dark red; and the tunic, purple bordered with white; the latter, spangled with triple stars of gold, precisely after the fashion figured in the 'Book of Kells.' The chariot in which the principal figure stands resembles some figured on our ancient crosses, and the charioteer wears a pointed cap, green tunic, and tartan vest. All the vanquished wear beards, and their hoods envelop their chins."

The study of ancient costume has especial interest for the historian, as the culture, civilization, and commercial relations of a people can be readily deduced from it; and in the numerous and curious illustrations of the catalogue, taken from ancient records, illuminated manuscripts, and the ancient crosses and sepulchral monuments of the country, everything has been brought together that could throw light on this obscure subject. One most remarkable illustration is a full-length portrait of Dermot M'Morrough, king of Leinster, taken from an illuminated copy of Giraldus Cambrensis in the possession of Sir Thomas Philips, which portrait was very probably drawn from the life.

From all that is known on the subject, it would appear that linen and cloth of every degree of fineness, according

to the rank of the wearer, were the principal materials used in ancient Irish dress. No remains of silk garments have been discovered; nor do the historical records, as far as we are aware, make any mention of silk being employed in personal wear. It is remarkable also, that while a traditional belief exists that linen has been known from time immemorial in Ireland, yet the Academy does not possess a single specimen of ancient linen. The linen shirts worn at the time of the Norman Invasion are said to have been of immense size, and dyed a saffron colour. But there is undeniable proof, that the tartan, or cloth of divers colours, which we are accustomed to associate only with Scotland, was worn universally in Ireland in ancient times. Portions of tartans are preserved in the Museum, and probably each grade of rank and clan possessed a characteristic plaid as well as a special dress. A love of variegated and glowing colours, and a tendency to gorgeous decoration, seem to have been always instinctive to the Irish nature.

The female dress of Ireland at a period subsequent to the barbaric age is also illustrated not from conjecture, but from actual observation; for in 1843 a complete female antique dress was discovered many feet below the surface in a bog (these museums of Nature, where she stores up and preserves her specimens of antique life with a care and perfection that no mortal curator can ever hope to equal), and is now to be seen in the Academy's museum.

It consists of a boddice with a long waist, open in front, and attached to a full plaited skirt; which, like the Albanian fustanell, consists of several narrow gored breadths, gathered into small plaits at top, and spreading into a broad quilling

at the bottom; each plait being stitched on the inside to preserve the form.

The bottom of the skirt measures twenty-two and a half feet in circumference, and there are ninety-two plaits, most elaborately arranged, so that the joining of each of the narrow breadths should fall within a plait. The material is of a brown woollen cloth.

No pictorial representations exist of female costume earlier than the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, but from the sculptured effigies on tombs, we find it consisted of either a flowing robe and veil, or of the plaited skirt and tight boddice already described, while the head-dress varied according to the fashion of the day.

The subject of personal decoration is perfectly illustrated in the Museum; the Academy possessing one of the largest collections in Europe, beginning at the first rude effort at adornment of the barbaric age, up to the rich golden ornaments of a later, though still pre-historic period.

It is not pleasant to national pride, after feeding on the gorgeous fables of our earliest annalists, to contemplate the primitive Irishman fastening his mantle of untanned deer-skin with a fish-bone or a thorn, as we know the Germans did in the time of Tacitus; yet, unhappily, antiquarian research will not allow us to doubt the fact of the simple savageness of the first colonists. But when the intellect of the rude man stirred within him, he began to carve the bones of the animals he killed into articles of ornament and use. Thus the slender bones of fowls were fashioned into cloak pins, especially the leg bone, where the natural enlargement at one end suggested the form, and afforded surface

for artistic display. From this first rude essay of the child-man can be traced the continuous development of his ideas in decorative art, from the carving of bones to the casting of metal, up to the most elaborate working in enamel, gold, and precious stones. Our Museum is rich in these objects, containing more than five hundred specimens. Pins, fibulæ,[1] and brooches having been discovered in Ireland in immense quantities and variety, some of which are unsurpassed for beauty of design and workmanship.

"In these articles," Sir William remarks, "the process of development is displayed in a most remarkable manner; for, from the simple unadorned pin or spike of copper, bronze or brass (the metallic representation of the thorn), to the most elaborately wrought ring-brooch of precious metal, the patterns of which are now used by our modern jewellers—every stage of art, both in form and handicraft, is clearly defined, not one single link is wanting. In the first stage all the artist's powers were lavished on the decoration of the pin itself, or in the development of the head, which was enlarged and decorated into every possible shape and conceivable pattern. When it was almost impossible to improve the head, a ring or loop was added, passed through a hole in the neck. In the next stage, the ring was doubled, or many rings added. Finally, the ring was enlarged, flattened out, decorated, enamelled, covered with filigree, and jewelled, until, in those magnificent specimens of silver and gold

[1] This word "fibulæ" is a heathenish and imported term, quite foreign to the Irish tongue. There is no other word known in the Irish language to designate a brooch, be it of bone or be it of gold, than *Dealg*, which signifies a thorn.

found in Ireland of late years, it reached a degree of perfection which modern art can with difficulty imitate."

The forms of many of the Irish brooches, pins, and fibulæ, are identical with numbers found in Scandinavia, but the peculiar ornamentation—a curiously involved spiral or serpent coil, which can be traced back through all ages of Irish art to the most remote antiquity—is met nowhere else; neither in Etruscan nor Teutonic art, though some assert its origin can be traced to Assyria and Egypt. However, this *Opus Hibernicum*, as it was termed by the learned Kemble, is one of the tests by which an antiquary can distinguish national from imported work. It is also remarkable that the ornaments of like form found so copiously in Scandinavia are all of bronze, while the Irish are of gold, a metal which, there is every reason to believe, existed in Ireland abundantly in former times, and is still found in small quantities. That it was used for ornament, even coeval with the stone celt, is also probable, as the rudest savage can make the ductile metal assume any form by simply flattening it between two stones.

Many centuries before the Christian era, according to the annals, gold was smelted in Wicklow, to the east of the Liffey. Goblets and brooches were covered with it, and the artificer's name was Ucadan; but no further mention of native gold occurs throughout our ancient histories. However, two thousand years after, the story of the old annalist was singularly confirmed; for, in the year 1796, in the same part of Wicklow, perhaps on the very site of the furnace of Ucadan, upwards of £10,000 worth of native gold was obtained in about two months,

and small quantities have been gathered there from time to time ever since.

The subject of the gold antiquities is one full of interest, and even of mystery. The quantity of antique manufactured gold ornaments dug up in Ireland, even in recent times, has been estimated as exceeding half a million of money. As much more may be lying beneath our feet, for, every year, as new cuttings are made for railroads, or bogs are drained, deposits of gold ornaments come to light. Two or three years ago a deposit of massive gold bracelets, in value nearly £5,000, as bright and beautiful as if just finished, was dug up in Carlow; and, still more recently, several antique golden frontlets were found by a labourer while working in a field, who, utterly unconscious of their value, threw them to his children, and the author of the Catalogue actually discovered, one day, the son of the man cutting them up into nose-rings for his pigs. They were happily rescued, and are now in the Academy. The form is beautiful and classic; it is a half-moon diadem, resembling accurately some seen in Etruscan sculpture.

What inestimable treasures may have been thus lost! not merely from ignorance, but also from cupidity; for numbers of gold articles have disappeared in the smelting-pot of the jewellers, who bought them from the country people at perhaps a fractional part of their value. The very small annual sum allowed to the Academy by Government is another cause why the work of destruction still goes on. Valuable gold ornaments are frequently offered there for sale—too valuable, unhappily, for the Academy to purchase, and with an indignant regret that is almost like a sense of shame, the

members are obliged to leave them to their fate. Of course legislation could remedy all this, as it has done in Denmark, where the State has secured the possession of all antiquities found in the country for the National Museum, without any wrong being done to the finder, who is paid the full value of all he brings. But in Denmark there is a strong national pride in the subject, and the peasant, who is early taught by the local authorities the value of such things, would as soon think of destroying an antiquity as of burning his Bible.

It is still a question among the learned whether this enormous amount of manufactured gold, far exceeding all yet discovered in England and Scandinavia, was altogether native, or to some extent imported. An analysis of some of the gold has been made, to test the identity of its constituents with the gold of Wicklow, and in the instance selected the gold was found similar. This fact and the ornamentation are proofs to uphold the native theory; while opponents state that they came in the way of commerce from the Carthaginians who traded here. Ornaments identical with the Irish in form—the twisted torques, the bracelets, the diadems, and frontlets, having been found in the interior of Africa, and along the Gold Coast; in India, Barbary, Spain, and the islands of the Mediterranean.

Several ancient Irish musical instruments, the chief of which were the harp and trumpet, and numerous fragments of harps have been found also in the oldest crannoges, proving how ancient was the knowledge and the practice of music in Ireland—a fact confirmed by the Welsh Annals, which state that the Irish surpassed all nations in their proficiency on the harp.

The Museum possesses sixteen antique bronze trumpets, one of which—the finest specimen yet found in Europe—measures about eight feet in length, and the joining is curiously riveted with metal studs, a fact proving its antiquity, as it must have been formed in an age unacquainted with the art of soldering. With regard to coins, Sir William Wilde utterly denies that bronze ring-money was ever used in Ireland, as stated by Sir William Betham, who borrowed his idea from Vallancy; for all the articles hitherto described as ring-money, are now proved undeniably to belong to chain-dress or armour. The ancient medium of barter seems to have been so many head of cattle, or so many ounces of gold. A native coinage was utterly unknown. The amount of bronze discovered in Ireland is enormous, and proves the long duration of a period when it was in general use, before iron was known. Specimens of every object necessary to a people's life have been found fabricated of it—weapons, tools, armour, swords, and spears; culinary vessels, caldrons, spoons, and other minor requisites; hair-pins for the flowing locks of the women; brooches for the graceful mantles of the chiefs, but not of the dark, dingy, modern compound that bears the name. Irish antique bronze was a metal of bright, glowing, golden beauty, and the effect of an army marching with spears of this metal in the flashing sunlight, we can imagine to have been truly magnificent.

The people of this remote age must have attained considerable skill in the manufacturing arts—must have had laws, religion, and social culture—yet how little would have been known of them if these mute witnesses of a past

humanity had not been interpreted by science. Archæology and philology are the only solvents of the past; and no theory can henceforth be tolerated that will not stand the test of being assayed by them. The philologist traces the origin and affinities of our people in the roots of the Irish language; while their habits, modes of life, their position in the scale of civilization throughout the long duration of the unwritten age, can only be read in the letters of stone, bronze, and gold upon the walls of our Academy.

Irish manuscripts, though the oldest in North-western Europe, date back scarcely further than the fifth or sixth century. Beyond that period we enter a region of darkness, through which no literature or letters radiate their light; yet, unassisted by either, the archæologist can reconstruct the primitive world and the primitive man with greater truth and certainty than if he possessed both; for the facts of a museum are changeless and enduring, and can suffer no mutation from prejudice or ignorance, yet we must remember that it is science alone that gives value to these facts. Without its aid a museum would be only an aggregate of curious lumber. The archæologist must combine, in a synthetic and comprehensive view—must arrange in their proper sequence—must elucidate by a world-wide learning, these sibyline fragments of the past; or this writing on the wall, though it express the most irrefragable truths of history, will remain an undeciphered hieroglyphic, as useless and unprofitable to the student as the alphabet of an unknown language, which he is unable to form into intelligible words. All this Sir William Wilde accomplished for the Museum of the Academy, and in his clear and well-arranged volumes we can

read the stone pages of our history by the light of all the learning and antiquarian research of the past and present age gathered to one focus.

The conclusion to be drawn from the facts laid before us is, that in an age of remote antiquity (M. Boucher de Perthes, the well-known French author and antiquarian, has written a book to prove that it was prior to the Deluge) the entire face of the earth was covered by a nomad people, speaking the one language, and living after the same rude fashion, with no other weapons than sharpened stone. This race passed away, and no research has ever yet discovered their name, their language, their religion, or the era of their existence. Not an inscription, not a word, not a letter graven on any stone have they left to allay the torturing curiosity of the inquirer. Yet traces of them have been found from Mexico to Japan; from the steppes of Tartary to the Pampas; round the shores of every European sea, and along the coasts of the two oceans. Wherever man's foot has trodden within historic times, they trod before all history. Even in this outlying isle of ours vestiges of this people are strewn so thickly that the very soil seems made of their remains. Then another race swept across Europe—a comparatively cultured race, bearing with them the chief element of civilization—a knowledge of metals. They spread over both sides of the Danube; left their footprints in Italy and on the shores of the Baltic; overran Switzerland, France, and Belgium, giving names to the rivers they passed, the mountains they crossed, and the towns they founded, which names cling to them even to this day. From Belgium they spread to Britain, and from thence, or

by the seacoast of Spain, they reached Ireland, where they founded the existing Irish race, and brought with them the knowledge of metals, the arts of music and poetry, and the still existing Irish language. Historians name these people the Celts. On the Continent they were gradually crushed down beneath the Roman and Gothic races, and in Britain also by successive conquests. But Ireland suffered no conquest. Here the old Celtic race lived and flourished, and here alone their language, which everywhere else melted into a compound with the Gothic and Latin, maintained its distinct existence. The English language is the gradually formed product and result of the successive conquests of England. But no invading people ever gained sufficient strength in Ireland to influence the original language. It exists still amongst us, living and spoken the same as when thousands of years ago the Celtic people first crossed the Danube and gave it the name it now bears. For this reason all the archæologists of Europe turn their eyes to our sacred isle, as to the one great museum of the Celtic race. Thus, Professor Keller, of Zurich, anxiously studies the formation of Irish crannoges, to compare them with the Swiss; and the learned Pictet, of Geneva, demands the long-deferred completion of the Irish Dictionary, with an ardour that puts to shame our own apathy, as without it comparative philology wants its chief corner-stone. The great facts of our Museum, illustrated, described, and laid before the learned of Europe in a comprehensive form, will go far to correct the crude, imperfect notions of Continental writers concerning Irish antiquities. For instance, Professor Lindenschmidt, of Mayence, asserted in one of his earlier

published works, that all the ancient bronze articles found on this side of the Alps were imported from Etruria, as a people so barbarous as the Irish could never have produced them. The fact being, that the largest, most varied, most highly decorated collection of bronze celts existing is to be found in our Museum, along with numerous specimens of the moulds in which they were cast, discovered on the very spot where the ancient workman had lit his furnace. This universal interest and demand for information are enough to stimulate our learned men to exertion, seeing that they are, in a measure, answerable to Europe for the proper preservation of our antiquities, the very rudest of which can tell some tale of the past, as the mere furrows along the streets of the dead Pompeii show that life once passed there.

EARLY IRISH ART.

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EARLY Irish art illustrates in a very remarkable manner those distinctive qualities of Irish nature, which we know from the legendary traditions have characterized our people from the earliest times. The earnest religious faith, the love of gorgeous colouring, the tendency to express ideas by symbol, and the vivid imagination that delights in the strange and unusual, often fantastic and grotesque, in place of the absolute and real, combined with the patient and minute elaboration of detail, so truly Oriental in its spirit, specially mark Irish ornamentation. All these reverential, artistic, fanciful, and subtle evidences of the peculiar Celtic spirit find a full and significant expression in the wonderful splendours of early Irish art, as seen chiefly in the ancient illuminated manuscripts.

The reputation of Irish artists for excellence in these costly productions became so extended throughout Christian Europe in the early ages, that at the request of many nations Ireland sent forth numbers of her most cultured artists as teachers and scribes to the great foreign schools and colleges; and numerous examples of skilled Irish work are

still existing in Continental Libraries, where they are held as amongst the most sacred of the national treasures. For a full and comprehensive illustration of this subject it would be impossible to over-estimate the artistic and historic value of Mr. Westwood's magnificent book on Anglo-Saxon and Irish Manuscripts. The volume contains *facsimiles* from all the principal illuminated Celtic manuscripts of Europe, executed with the most scrupulous care, chiefly by Mr. Westwood himself, the majority of them with the aid of a magnifying glass, so minute and delicate are the lines of ornamentation to be represented. In fact, for accuracy of information and richness of illustration, the volume surpasses anything yet published on Celtic art in the United Kingdom, and may claim equality with the grand, but enormously expensive, work of Count Bastard, on early French Manuscripts. Mr. Westwood, in a learned preliminary dissertation, gives his views on the origin and development of Hiberno-Saxon art during the first thousand years of the Christian era, and finds in the ornamentation, as observed by Kemble and others, a distinct *Opus Hibernicum* and an *Opus Anglicum*, but the Irish the more perfect of the two, and wholly different from Continental art of the same era.

The earliest manuscripts of Greece and Rome show nothing like this distinctive Celtic art; nor the Italian mosaics, nor the wall paintings of Herculaneum or Pompeii—beautiful as are the representations of the human figure found there; nor does Byzantine art afford any similar types. From whence, then, did the Irish, the acknowledged founders of Celtic art in Europe, derive their ideas of ornamentation? This is one of the historical mysteries which, like the origin

of the Round Towers, still awaits solution. One must travel a long way, even to the far East, before finding in the decorations of the ancient Hindoo temples anything approaching to the typical idea that runs through all Irish ornamentation. It is, however, an inconvertible fact, and one proved to demonstration by Mr. Westwood's learning, labour, and researches, that a time when the pictorial art was almost extinct in Italy and Greece, and indeed scarcely existed in other parts of Europe—namely, from the fifth to the end of the eighth century—a style of art had been originated, cultivated, and brought into a most marvellous state of perfection in Ireland absolutely distinct from that of any other part of the civilized world; and which being carried abroad by Irish and Saxon missionaries was adopted and imitated in the schools of Charlemagne, and in all the other great schools and monasteries founded by them upon the Continent.

In the middle of the ninth century the influence of the artists of Germany reacted on the productions of England, and in consequence of the more frequent communications of learned men with Rome, classical models began to be adopted, floral decorations were introduced, and figures in the Byzantine style. With these the Irish ornamentation was combined, principally in the framework of the design. Then it gradually disappeared from England, where it was replaced by Franco-Saxon and Teutonic art; so that after the tenth century Mr. Westwood has not found any Anglo-Saxon manuscript executed in the Lindisfarne or Irish style. But it remained for several centuries longer in use in Ireland, though the ornamental de-

tails exhibit little of the extreme delicacy of the earlier productions. With reference to these, Mr. Digby Wyatt observes that, in delicacy of handling and minute but faultless execution, the whole range of palæography offers nothing comparable to the early Irish manuscripts, especially "The Book of Kells," the most marvellous of them all. One cannot wonder, therefore, that Giraldus Cambrensis, when over in Ireland in the reign of Henry II., on being shown an illuminated Irish manuscript, exclaimed, "This is more like the work of angels than of men!"

The peculiarities which characterize true Celtic art, whether in stone, metal work, or manuscript illumination, consist in the excessive and minute elaborations of intricate ornamental details, such as the spirals, the interlaced ribbands, and the entwined serpents and other animal forms, so familiar to the students of our national art treasures in the museum of the Royal Irish Academy. These forms are invariably found in all Irish decoration. The initial letters and ornamentations of the ancient manuscripts are reproduced in the gigantic stone crosses and the more delicate metal work of the shrines and reliquaries; and from this identity of ornamentation the age can be determined of all art monuments or remains, and objects readily classified as cotemporaneous. The Irish adhered with wonderful fidelity to their peculiar art ideas for at least eight hundred years; and while the Saxons coquetted with Frankish art, and finally gave themselves up wholly to Norman influence, the Irish continued their exclusive devotion to the ancient and national Celtic type. Intensely national, indeed, were those early artists; they gave ideas to the world, but received

none in exchange. In their pictures Goliath appears as an Irish warrior, and David bears an Irish harp in his hands; while our Lord Himself, in one of the Irish sculptures, is represented wearing the Irish dress. When the nation fell under Norman sway in the twelfth century, Norman ideas naturally became triumphant; but everything that is most beautiful and interesting in antique Irish art belongs to the pre-Norman period—the gold ornaments, the gorgeous manuscripts, such as the Gospels of Durrow and of Kolls; the grandest of the sculptured crosses, Cormac's Chapel, that architectural gem of Western Europe; the richly decorated shrines, such as that of St. Monchan, "the most important ancient shrine now in existence in these islands," Mr. Westwood states; and specially interesting to us Irish, from the recorded fact that it was covered with pure gold by Roderick O'Connor, the last king of Ireland, and was, as the Annals state, the most beautiful piece of art ever made in Erin. All these evidences of high cultivation and artistic skill were in existence long before the Norman adventurers set foot on our shores. Irish art, however, died out with Irish Nationality; and in two centuries or so, after the Norman Conquest, it ceased to exist, and was replaced by the pseudo-Roman or Irish Romanesque style. Irish art can be easily traced throughout the Continent by the peculiar ornamentation which characterized it; and wherever, amongst the early manuscripts in foreign libraries, one is found surpassing all the rest in the singular beauty and firmness of the writing, and the exquisite delicacy of the minute and elaborate illuminations, there at once an Irish hand is recognized as worker, or an Irish intellect as teacher. The

same symbols and ideas run through all of them—there are the same strange, elongated, contorted, intertwined figures; the same rich mosaics of interlaced lines—so minute, so delicate, so rich in brilliant colours, that the border of the page seems powdered with crushed jewels. There is something almost melancholy in this devotion to a species of art in which there was nothing to stimulate the feelings or to warm the heart. No representations of Nature's glories in tree or flower, or the splendour of human beauty; the artist's aim being rather, it would seem, to kill the human in him, by forcing his genius to work only on the cold abstractions of spirals and curves, and endless geometrical involutions, and the infinite monotony of those interlaced lines, still coiling on, for ever and ever, through the centuries, like the windings of the serpent of evil, which they were meant to symbolize, through the successive generations of our fated humanity. Truly, these artists offered up the sacrifice of love. Their lives and the labour of their lives were given humbly, silently, reverently, to God, and the glory of God's Word. They had no other aim in life, and when the work was done, a work so beautiful that even now the world cannot equal it, there was no vainglorious boast of himself came from the lips of the artist worker, but the manuscript ends with some simple devotional words, his name, and the desire to be remembered as the writer, like the *orate pro me* on the ancient tombstones; this was all he asked or hoped for in return for the years of youth and life he had incarnated in the illuminated pages of the Gospels. For in those early ages art had no existence save in union with religion. Humanity brought together all its most precious ointments to

pour upon the feet of Jesus. In Ireland especially—the Island of Saints—whatever genius could devise or the hand of the artist could execute was lavished upon some work that would recall the presence of God to the people, stimulate His worship, or make known His word; upon the Psalters, the Gospels, the crosses, the costly shrines, the jewelled cases for a saint's relics, the golden covers for the holy books. But nothing of that period has come down to us that shows a luxury in domestic life. The Word of God was shrined in gold, made rich with gems and enamels, but the people lived their old simple life in their old rude huts; and even the kings gave their wealth, not to erect palaces, but to build churches, to endow abbeys, to help the cause of God, and speed the holy men who were His ministers, in their crusade against evil, ignorance, and darkness.

It is no idle boast to say that the Irish were the teachers of Europe from the seventh to the tenth century in art and religion. Mr. Westwood has visited all the great libraries of England and the Continent, and found abundant evidence that Irish art, or Hiberno-Saxon art, was diffused over Europe during that period. The Greek and Latin manuscripts are not illuminated, but are adorned with intercalated pictures; Irish art differs from them in many respects—amongst others, in having the figures and rich ornamentations printed on the leaves and borders of the book itself. He has given *facsimiles* from Irish manuscripts now existing in the libraries of Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Lichfield, Salisbury, Lambeth, the British Museum, and other places; and, passing to the Continent, has laid under contribution the great libraries of Paris, Rouen, Boulogne, St. Gall,

Milan, Rome, Munich, Darmstadt, Stockholm, Copenhagen, and even St. Petersburg, and thus proved the excellence to which Irish artists, or Saxon artists educated in Irish schools, attained more than a thousand years ago. Nor is it strange that Ireland should have been the teacher, considering its early Christianity, which had made some progress amongst the people even in St. Jerome's time ; a little later amongst the Britons; but at the end of the sixth century Augustine and his monks found the stolid Anglo-Saxons still in the bonds of their ancient paganism and Wodenism. The Celtic race received the Christian faith gladly as early as the fourth century, but it was a difficult matter to bring light to the Saxon soul. It has at all times proved itself rather opaque in nature. The Saxon tribes of Germany did not renounce their idols till forced to it by the strong coercive power and keen sword of Charlemagne, in the latter half of the eighth century.

With Christianity came to Ireland the knowledge of letters; at least no older inscription has been found than that on the pillar stone of Lugnadon, St. Patrick's nephew, which may still be seen beside the ruin of St. Patrick's oratory in one of the beautiful islands of Lough Corrib;[1] and the oldest manuscript existing in Ireland is the Book of Armagh, a copy of St. Jerome's Latin version of the Gospels written in the old Roman letters, and very valuable for the beauty of the writing and the various drawings it contains. Learning was at once consecrated to the service of God in

[1] See Sir William Wilde's work, "Lough Corrib and its Islands," where a drawing of this inscription is given.

those early days, and to multiply copies of the Gospels was the praiseworthy and devout task of the first great teachers and missionaries. The Book of Durrow and the Book of Kells, both of the early part of the sixth century, are believed to be the work of St. Columba himself. The latter, the Book of Kells, has filled all critics with wonder and admiration. It is more decorated than any existing copy of the Gospels, and is pronounced by learned authorities to be "the most beautiful manuscript in existence of so early a date, and the most magnificent specimen of penmanship and illumination in the Western World." They are both written in the Latin uncial character, common to Europe at the time; and here it may be noticed, in passing, that the so-called Irish alphabet is simply the Latin alphabet modified by the first missionaries to suit the Irish sounds, as Ulphila, the apostle of the Goths, invented an alphabet of mingled Greek and Latin characters, in order to enable him to make his translation of the Gospels into Gothic; and as the Greek missionaries invented the Russian alphabet, which is a modified form of the Greek, for a like purpose. That the Irish should retain the old form of the Latin letters, while most of the other nations of Europe have discarded it, is to be regretted, as nothing would facilitate the study of Irish so much at the present day, when one has so little leisure to spell out with much painful endeavour the barbarous symbols of a bygone age, as the adoption of the modern English alphabet. The first Irish book that was ever printed appeared in 1571, and is now in the Bodleian Library. It is a catechism of Irish grammar, and the Irish alphabet has suffered no modification or improve-

ment since. It was about the end of the sixth century that the fame of Irish learning and the skill of Irish artists began to extend to England, and from thence to the Continent; and Irish scribes were employed to make copies of the Gospels and teach the splendid art of illumination in the English monasteries. From that period till the end of the ninth century the Irish were a power in Europe from their learning and piety—eminent in Greek as well as Latin, and the great teachers of scholastic theology to the Christian world. The Gospels of Lindisfarne, executed by monks of Iona in the seventh century, and now "the glory of the British Museum," form a most important element in the early history of Celtic art, as this book seems to have been the principal model for succeeding artists.

In the splendid folio copy of the Gospels at Copenhagen of the tenth century, supposed to have been brought to Denmark by King Canute, the figure of St. Matthew seated, while another saint draws back a curtain, is copied from the Gospels of Lindisfarne, while the border is in the tenth century style. The Gospels of St. Chad, now in Lichfield Library, are in the Irish style of the eighth century, and are very noticeable as having marginal notes in Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and ancient British, the latter being the oldest specimen of the ancient British language now in existence. The illuminations also are copied from the Lindisfarne book. St. Chad, it is known, was educated in Ireland, in the school of St. Finian. There are Irish Gospels at Durham of the eighth century. The Gospels of Mac-Regal are at Oxford, and the Gospels of Mac-Duran, the smallest and most beautiful known, are in the Archbishop's palace at

Lambeth. As Saxon art progressed and became influenced by Roman models, the Irish scribes were chiefly employed wherever elegance, harmony of colour, and extreme delicacy of touch were particularly requisite, as in the borders and initial letters. Thus, the Psalter of St. Augustine, said to be from Rome, and which resembles in style the manuscript Virgil of the fifth century, in the Vatican, is framed in pure Celtic art. On the Continent, also, the borders of the great manuscripts were generally confined to Irish hands. A Latin copy of the Gospels at Treves, evidently produced by one of the establishments founded by the Irish upon the Rhine, is remarkable for a combination of Celtic, Teutonic, and Franco-Byzantine art. The borders are Irish while the figures are Byzantine. These illuminated borders have the glitter and radiance of a setting of jewels, and are thus admirably suited to fulfil the true object of all ornamentation, which Mr. Ruskin defines as being "beautiful in its place, and perfect in its adaptation to the purpose for which it was employed."

In the sixth century St. Gall, born in Ireland, accompanied St. Columbanus to the Continent, and founded the monastery in Switzerland that bears his name. Here many interesting manuscripts and fragments are still preserved, remarkable for the old Irish marginal notes to the Latin text. These are considered by philologists of such importance that thirteen quarto plates and *facsimiles* from them are given by Dr. Ferdinand Keller in the Zurich Society's Transactions. An interesting relic of an Irish saint is also preserved in the Cathedral of Wurtzburg—a copy of the Gospels of St. Kilian, martyred in 689, and which was

found stained with his blood on opening his tomb about fifty years after.

Thus, the Irish can be tracked, as it were, across Europe by their illuminated footsteps. They were emphatically the witnesses of God, the light-bearers through the dark ages, and, above all, the faithful guardians and preservers of God's sacred Word. A hundred years before Alfred came to Ireland to be educated, and went back to civilize his native country by the knowledge he had acquired there, the Christian schools of Germany, under the direction of Irishmen, had been founded by Charlemagne. Through France, along the Rhine, through Switzerland, Italy, and Spain, the Irish missionaries taught and worked, founding schools and monasteries, and illuminating by their learning the darkest pages of European history. One of the great treasures of the Imperial Library of Paris is a beautiful Irish copy of the Latin Gospels. The College of St. Isidore, at Rome, possesses many Irish manuscripts—one of them is a Psalter, folio size, written throughout in letters a quarter of an inch long, and which is considered to be the finest of the later works of the Irish school. The celebrated Golden Gospels of Stockholm are of Hiberno-Saxon art of the ninth century. This book has a singular history. It was stolen from England, and disappeared for ages, but finally was discovered at Mantua in the seventeenth century, and purchased for the Royal Library at Stockholm. St. Petersburg also possesses a highly illuminated copy of the Gospels, which was taken from France at the time of the great Revolution, and found its way to the far North. It is a perfect and beautiful specimen of the Irish style of the eighth century, and the

initial letters can only be compared to those of the Book of Kells. All these Irish manuscript Gospels are, without exception, copies of St. Jerome's Latin version. No Irish translation of the Gospels has ever been found. Learning was evidently considered a sacred thing, indispensable for the priesthood, but not necessary for the masses; yet it seems strange that while the learned and pious Irish saints and missionaries were devoting their lives to multiplying copies of the Gospels for other nations, and disseminating them over Europe, they never thought of giving the people of their own land the Word of God to read in their own native tongue. The leading Teutonic races, on the contrary, with their free spirit, were not satisfied with accepting the doctrines of the faith, simply as an act of obedience to their teachers. They demanded the right of private judgment, the exercise of individual reason, and the Gospels were translated into Gothic as early as the fourth century by Bishop Ulphila for the use of the Gothic nation.

This remarkable book, called the "Codex Argenteus," is now in the Royal Library of Upsala, having, after many dangers and vicissitudes, at last found its way to the people who hold themselves the true descendants of the Goths, and whose king still bears the proud title of "King of the Swedes, Goths, and Vandals;" and an edition of it, with annotations, has been published by the learned Professor Andreas Uppstrom, of Upsala.

Towards the close of the tenth century the Frankish style of ornamentation, a blending of the classical and the Byzantine, had almost entirely superseded the beautiful and delicate Celtic art both in England and on the Continent,

and about the fifteenth century it disappeared even from our own Ireland, the country of its origin. The gorgeous missals and illuminated Gospels, instinct with life, genius, holy reverence, and patient love, were destined to be replaced soon after by the dull mechanism of print; while Protestantism used all its new-found strength to destroy that innate tendency of our nature which seeks to manifest religious fervour, faith, and zeal by costly offerings and sacrifices. The golden-bordered holy books, the sculptured crosses, the jewelled shrines were crushed under the heel of Cromwell's troopers; the majestic and beautiful abbeys were desecrated and cast down to ruin, while beside them rose the mean and ugly structures of the Reformed faith, as if the annihilation of all beauty were then considered to be the most acceptable homage which man could offer to the God who created all beauty, and fitted the human soul to enjoy and manifest the spiritual, mystic, and eternal loveliness of form, and colour, and symmetry.

Since that mournful period when the conquering iconoclasts cast down the temples and crushed the spirit of our people, there has been no revival of art in Ireland. It is not wonderful, therefore, that we cling with so much of fond, though sad, admiration to the beautiful memorials of the past, and welcome with warm appreciation the efforts of able, learned, and distinguished men to illustrate and preserve them, as in this splendid and costly book which Mr. Westwood has contributed to Celtic art.

Our Ancient Capital.

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The history of Dublin, so admirably narrated by Mr. Gilbert in his learned and instructive volumes,[1] begins the modern period of Irish history when Ireland became indissolubly united with the British Empire—the greatest empire of the world—and legendary lore, like all the ancient usages and superstitions, began to fade and perish before advancing civilization, as the luxurious undergrowth of a primeval forest before advancing culture.

A sketch of the rise of the capital of Ireland, with all the changes produced in Irish life by the new modes of thought and action introduced by Norman influence, forms therefore a fitting close to the legendary, early-historic period, so full of poetry and charm for the imagination, with its splendour of kings and bards, its shadowy romance and mist-woven dreams, and its ideal fairy world of beauty and grace, of music and song; when the people lived the free, joyous life of the childhood of humanity under their native princes, and the terrible struggle of a crushed and oppressed

[1] "The History of Dublin." 3 vols. By J. T. Gilbert, M.R.I.A. Dublin.

nation against a foreign master had not yet begun; the struggle that has lasted for seven centuries, and still goes on with exhaustless force and fervour.

The history of cities is the history of nations—the most perfect index of the social altitude, mental development, physical perfection, and political freedom, which at any given period a people may have attained. Every stone within a city is a hieroglyphic of the century that saw it raised. By it we trace human progression through all its phases: from the first rude fisher's hut, the altar of the primitive priest, the mound of the first nomad warrior, the stone fortalice or simple fane of the early Christian race, up to the stately and beautiful temples and palaces which evidence the luxury and refinement of a people in its proudest excess, or human genius in its climax of manifestation.

Thus Babylon, Thebes, Rome, Jerusalem, are words that express nations. The ever-during interest of the world circles round them, for their ruins are true and eternal pages of human history. Every fallen column is a fragment of a past ritual, or a symbol of a dynasty. The very dust is vital with great memories, and a philosopher, like the comparative anatomist, might construct the entire life of a people—its religion, literature, and laws—from these fragments of extinct generations—these fossil paleographs of man.

Statue and column, mausoleum and shrine, are trophies of a nation's triumphs or its tragedies. The young children, as they gaze on them, learn the story of the native heroes, poets, saints, and martyrs, leaders and lawgivers, who have flung their own glory as a regal mantle over their country. Spirits of the past, from the phantom-land, dwell in the

midst of them. We feel their presence, and hear their words of inspiration or warning, alike in the grandeur or decadence of an ancient city.

Modern capitals represent also, not only the history of the past, but the living concentrated will of the entire nation. Thus is it with London, Berlin, and Vienna, while Paris, the *cité verbe*, as Victor Hugo calls her, represents not only the tendencies of France, but of Europe.

Dublin, however, differs from all other capitals, past or present, in this wise—that by its history we trace, not the progress of the native race, but the triumphs of its enemies; and that the concentrated will of Dublin has always been in antagonism to the feelings of a large portion of the nation.

The truth is, that though our chief city of Ireland has an historical existence older than Christianity, yet this fair *Ath-Cliath* has no pretension to be called our ancient mother. From first to last, from a thousand years ago till now, Dublin has held the position of a foreign fortress within the kingdom; and its history has no other emblazonment beyond that of unceasing hostility or indifference to the native race.

"The inhabitants are mere English, though of Irish birth," wrote Hooker, three hundred years ago. "The citizens," says Holingshed, "have from time to time so galled the Irish, that even to this day the Irish fear a ragged and jagged black standard that the citizens have, though almost worn to the stumps. Up to Henry the Seventh's reign, an Englishman of Dublin was not punished for killing an Irishman, nor were Irishmen admitted to any office within the city that concerned the government either of the souls or bodies of the citizens. The Viceroys, the Archbishops, the

Judges, the Mayors, the Corporations, were all and always English, down to the very guild of tailors, of whom it stands on record that they would allow no Irishman to be of their fraternity. As the American colonists treated the red man, as the Spaniards of Cortez treated the Mexicans, as the English colony of India treated the ancient Indian princes, tribes, and people, so the English race of Dublin treated the Irish nation. They were a people to be crushed, ruined, persecuted, tormented, extirpated; and the Irish race, it must be confessed, retorted the hatred with as bitter an animosity. The rising of 1641 was like all Irish attempts—a wild, helpless, disorganized effort at revenge; and seven years later we read that Owen Roe O'Neil burned the country about Dublin, so that from one steeple there two hundred fires could be seen at once.

This being the position of a country and its capital, it is evident that no effort for national independence could gain nourishment in Dublin. Our metropolis is associated with no glorious moment of a nation's career, while in all the dark tragedies of our gloomy history its name and influence predominate. Dublin is connected with Irish patriotism only by the scaffold and the gallows. Statue and column do indeed rise there, but not to honour the sons of the soil. The public idols are foreign potentates and foreign heroes. Macaulay says eloquently on this subject, "The Irish people are doomed to see in every place the monuments of their subjugation; before the senate-house, the statue of their conqueror—within, the walls tapestried with the defeats of their fathers."

No public statue of an illustrious Irishman until recently

ever graced the Irish capital. No monument exists to which the gaze of the young Irish children can be directed, while their fathers tell them, "This was to the glory of your countrymen." Even the lustre Dublin borrowed from her great Norman colonists has passed away. Her nobility are remembered only as we note the desecration of their palaces; the most beautiful of all our metropolitan buildings but reminds us that there the last remnant of political independence was sold; the stately Custom-house, that Dublin has no trade; the regal pile of Dublin Castle, that it was reared by foreign hands to "curb and awe the city."

It is in truth a gloomy task to awaken the memories of Dublin, even of this century. There, in that obscure house of Thomas Street, visions rise of a ghastly night-scene, where the young, passionate-hearted Geraldine was struggling vainly in death-agony with his betrayers and captors. Pass on through the same street, and close by St. Catherine's Church you can trace the spot where the gallows was erected for Robert Emmet. Before that sombre prison pile two young brothers, handsome, educated, and well-born, and many a fair young form after them, expiated by death their fatal aspirations after Irish freedom. Look at that magnificent portal, leading now to the tables of the money-changers; through it, not a century ago, men, entrusted with the nation's rights, entered to sell them, and came forth, not branded traitors, but decorated, enriched, and rewarded with titles, pensions, and honours.

Yet the anomalous relation between our country and its capital springs naturally from the antecedents of both. Dublin was neither built by the Irish nor peopled by the

Irish: it is a Scandinavian settlement in the midst of a southern nation. Long even before the Norman Invasion two races existed in Ireland, as different as the lines of migration by which each had reached it; and though ages have rolled away since Scythian and Southern first met in this distant land, yet the elemental distinctions have never been lost; the races have never blended into one homogeneous nationality. Other nations, like the English, have blended with their conquerors, and progression and a higher civilization have been the result. Roman, Saxon, Dane, and Norman, each left their impress on the primitive Briton; and from Roman courage, Saxon thrift, and Norman pride has been evolved the strong, wise, proud island-nation that rules the world—the Ocean-Rome. A similar blending of opposite elements, but in different proportions, has produced Scotch national character—grave, wise, learned, provident, industrious, and unconquerably independent. But the Irish race remains distinct from all others, as Jew or Zincali. It has no elective affinities, enters into no new combinations, forms no new results, attracts to itself no Scythian qualities of stern self-reliance and the indomitable pride of independence, but still retains all the old virtues and vices of their semi-oriental nature, which make the history of Ireland so sad a record of mere passionate impulses ending mostly in failure and despair. The English, slow in speech and repellent in manner, are yet able not only to rule themselves well and ably, but to rule the world; while the Irish, so fascinating, eloquent, brave, and gifted, have never yet achieved a distinctive place in the political system of Europe. We had even the

advantage of an earlier education; we taught England her letters, Christianized her people, sheltered her saints, educated her princes; we give her the best generals, the best statesmen, the best armies; yet, withal, we have never yet found the strength to govern our own kingdom. Ethnologists will tell you this comes of race. It may be so. Let us then sail up the stream of time to Ararat, and try to find our ancestry amongst the children of the eight primal gods, as the ancients termed them, who there stepped forth from their ocean-prison to people the newly baptized world.

A very clever German advises all reviewers to begin from the Deluge, so that by no possibility can a single fact, direct or collateral, escape notice connected with the matter in hand. When treating of Ireland this rule becomes a necessity. Our nation dates from the dispersion, and our faults and failings, our features and our speech, have an authentic hereditary descent of four thousand years. Other primitive nations have been lost by migration, annihilated by war, swallowed up in empires, overwhelmed by barbarians: thus it was that the old kingdoms of Europe changed masters, and that the old nations and tongues passed away. Here only, in this island-prison of the Atlantic, can the old race of primitive Europe be still found existing as a nation, speaking the same tongue as the early tribes that first wandered westward, when Europe itself was an unpeopled wilderness.

We learn from sacred record that the first migrations of the human family, with "one language and one speech," were *from* the East; and every successive wave of population has still flowed from the rising towards the setting sun.

The progression of intellect and science is ever westward. The march of humanity is opposed to the path of the planet. Life moves contrary to matter. A metaphor, it may be, of our spirit-exile—this travelling "daily further from the East;" yet, when at the farthest limit, we are but approaching the glory of the East again.

Gradually, along the waters of the Mediterranean, the beautiful islands on its bosom serving as resting-places for the wanderers, or bridges for the tribes to pass over, the primal families of the Japhetian race reached in succession the three great peninsulas of the Great Sea, in each leaving the germ of a mighty nation. Still onward, led by the providence of God, they passed the portals of the Atlantic, coasted the shores of the vine-clad France, and so reached at length the "Isles of the Setting Sun," upon the very verge of Western Europe.

But many centuries may have elapsed during the slow progression of these maritime colonies, who have left their names indelibly stamped on the earth's surface, from Ionia to the Tartessus of Spain; and Miriam may have chanted the death-song of Pharaoh, and Moses led forth the people of God, before the descendants of the first navigators landed amidst the verdant solitudes of Ireland.

The earliest tribes that reached our island, though removed so far from the centre of light and wisdom, must still have been familiar with all science necessary to preserve existence, and to organize a new country into a human habitation. They cleared the forests, worked the mines, built chambers for the dead, after the manner of their kindred left in Tyre and Greece, wrought arms, defensive

and offensive, such as the heroes of Marathon used against the long-haired Persians; they raised altars and pillar-stones, still standing amongst us, mysterious and eternal symbols of a simple primitive creed; they had bards, priests, and lawgivers, the old tongue of Shinar, the dress of Nineveh, and the ancient faith, whose ritual was prayer and sacrifice.

The kindred races who remained stationary, built cities and temples, still a world's wonder, and arts flourished amongst them impossible to the nomads of the plains, or the wanderers by the ocean islands; but the destiny of dispersion was still on the race, and from these central points of civilization, tribes and families constantly went forth to achieve new conquests over the yet untamed earth.

Whatever wisdom the early island colonizers had brought with them, would have died out for want of nourishment, had not these new tribes, from countries where civilization had become developed and permanent, constantly given fresh impulses to progress. With stronger and more powerful arts and arms, they, in succession, gained dominion over their weaker predecessors, and by commerce, laws, arts, and learning, they organized families into nations, enlightening while they subjugated.

The conquest of Canaan gave the second great impetus to the human tides ever flowing westward. Irish tradition has, even in a confused manner, preserved the names of two amongst the leaders of the Sidonian fugitives who landed in Ireland. Partholan, with his wife Elga, and Gadelius, with his wife Scota.

"This Gadelius," say the legends, "was a noble gentle-

man, right wise, valiant, and well spoken, who, after Pharaoh was drowned, sailed for Spain, and from thence to Ireland, with a colony of Greeks and Egyptians, and his wife Scota, a daughter of Pharaoh's; and he taught letters to the Irish, and warlike feats after the Greek and Egyptian manner."

These later tribes brought with them the Syrian arts and civilization, such as dyeing and weaving, working in gold, silver, and brass, besides the written characters, the same that Cadmus afterwards gave to Greece, and which remained in use amongst the Irish, it is said, until modified by Saint Patrick into their present form, to assimilate them to the Latin.

Continued intercourse with their Tyrian kindred soon filled Ireland with the refinement of a luxurious civilization. From various sources, we learn that in those ancient times, the native dress was costly and picturesque, and the habits and mode of living of the chiefs and kings splendid and Oriental. The high-born and the wealthy wore tunics of fine linen of immense width, girdled with gold, and with flowing sleeves after the Eastern fashion. The fringed cloak, or *cuchula*, with a hood, after the Arab mode, was clasped on the shoulders with a golden brooch. Golden circlets, of beautiful and classic form, confined their long, flowing hair, and, crowned with their diadems, the chiefs sat at the banquet, or went forth to war. Sandals upon the feet, and bracelets and signet rings, of rich and curious workmanship, completed the costume. The ladies wore the silken robes and flowing veils of Persia, or rolls of linen wound round the head like the Egyptian Isis, the hair curiously platted down

the back and fastened with gold or silver bodkins, while the neck and arms were profusely covered with jewels.[1]

For successive centuries, this race, half Tyrian and half Greek, held undisputed possession of Ireland, maintaining, it is said, constant intercourse with the parent state, and, when Tyre fell, commercial relations were continued with Carthage. Communication between such distant lands was nothing to Phœnician enterprise. Phœnicians in the service of an Egyptian king had sailed round Africa and doubled the Cape of Good Hope two thousand years before the Portuguese. The same people built the navy of King Solomon a thousand years before Christ; and led the fleet to India for the gold necessary for the Temple. They cast the brazen vessels for the altar, employing for the purpose the tin which their merchants must have brought from the British Isles. Thus, to use the words of Humboldt, there can be no doubt that three thousand years ago "the Tyrian flag waved from Britain to the Indian Ocean."

A king of the race, long before Romulus founded Rome, erected a college at Tara, where the Druids taught the wisdom of Egypt, the mysteries of Samothrace, and the religion of Tyre. Then it was that Ireland was known as *Innis-Alga*—the Holy Island—held sacred by the Tyrian

[1] These relics of a civilization three thousand years old, may still be gazed upon by modern eyes in the splendid and unrivalled antiquarian collection of the Royal Irish Academy. The golden circlets, the fibulas, torques, bracelets, rings, &c., worn by the ancient race, are not only costly in value, but often so singularly beautiful in the working out of minute artistic details, that modern art is not merely unable to equal them, but unable even to comprehend how the ancient workers in metals could accomplish works of such delicate, almost microscopic, minuteness of finish.

mariners as the "Temple of the Setting Sun:" the last limit of Europe, from whence they could watch his descent into the mysterious western ocean.

But onward still came the waves of human life, unceasing, unresting. Driven forth from Carthage, Spain, and Gaul, the ancient race fled to the limits of the coast, then surged back, fought and refought the battle, conquering and yielding by turns, till at length the Syrian and the Latin elements blended into a new compound, which laid the foundation of modern Europe. But some tribes, disdaining such a union, fled from Spain to Ireland, and thus a new race, but of the old kindred, was flung on our shores by destiny.

The leaders, brave, warlike, and of royal blood, speedily assumed kingly sway, and all the subsequent monarchs of Ireland, the O'Briens, the O'Connors, the O'Neils, the O'Donnels, and other noble races, claim descent from them; and very proud, even to this day, are the families amongst the Irish who can trace back their pedigree to these princely Spaniards.

We have spoken hitherto but of the maritime colonists—that portion of the primal race who launched their ships on the Mediterranean to found colonies and kingdoms along its shores; then passing out through the ocean straits, the human tides surged upon the western limits of Europe, till the last wave found a rest on the green sward of ancient Erin. The habits of these first colonists were agricultural, commercial, and unwarlike; and ancient historians have left us a record of their temperament; volatile and fickle; passionate in joy and grief, with quick vivid natures prone to sudden excesses; religious and superstitious; a small,

dark-eyed race, lithe of limb and light of heart; the eternal children of humanity.

For illustrations we need not here refer to the Royal Irish Academy, for as they looked and lived three thousand years ago, they may be seen to this day in the mountains of Connemara and Kerry.

While this race travelled westward to the ocean by the great southern sea, other families of the Japhetian tribes were pressing westward also, but by the great northern plains. From Western India, by the Caspian and the Caucasus, past the shores of the Euxine, and still westward along the great rivers of Central Europe, up to the rude coasts of the Baltic, could be tracked "the westward marches of the unknown crowded nations," carrying with them fragments of the early Japhetian wisdom, and memories of the ancient primal tongue brought from the far East; but, as they removed further from the great lines of human intercourse, and were subjected to the influence of rigorous climates and nomadic habits, gradually becoming a rude, fierce people of warriors and hunters, predatory and cruel, living by the chase, warring with the wild wolves for their prey, and with each other for the best pasture-grounds. Driven by the severity of the seasons to perpetual migration, they built no cities and raised no monuments, save the sepulchral mound, which can be traced from Tartary to the German Ocean.

Without the civilizing aids of commerce or literature, their language degenerated into barbarous dialects; their clothing was the skin of wild beasts; their religion, confused relics of ancient creeds, contributed by the

wandering colonies of Egypt, Media, Greece, and Tyre, which occasionally blended with the Scythian hordes, wherein Isis, Mercury, and Hercules, the symbols of wisdom, eloquence, and courage, were the objects worshipped, though deteriorated by savage and sanguinary rites, whose sacrifices were human victims, and whose best votary was he who had slain most men.

From long wandering through the gloomy regions where the sun is darkened by perpetual clouds, they called themselves the "Children of the Night," and looked on her as the primal mother of all things.

Their pastimes symbolized the fierce daring of their lives. At their banquets they quaffed mead from the skulls of the slain, and chanted war-songs to the music of their clashing bucklers, while their dances were amid the points of their unsheathed swords.

From the influence of climate, and from constant intermarriage amongst themselves, certain physical and mental types became permanently fixed, and the gigantic frame, the fair hair and "stern blue eyes"[1] of the Scythian tribes, along with their bold, free, warlike, independent spirit, are still the marked characteristic of their descendants. For amidst these rude races of lion-hearted men, who cleared the forests of Central Europe for future empires, there were great and noble virtues born of their peculiar mode of life: a love of freedom, a lofty sense of individual dignity, bold defiance of tyranny, a fortitude and courage that rose to heroism—the spirit that brooks no fetter either on the mind or frame. We see that such men were destined for world-

[1] The expression of Tacitus.

rulers. To them Europe is indebted for her free political systems; the chivalry that ennobled warfare and elevated woman, and the religious reformation that freed Christianity from superstition. Every charter of human freedom dates from the Scythian forests.

The great northern concourse of fierce, wild tribes, comprehended originally under the name of Scythians, or Wanderers, having spread themselves over the north to the very kingdom of the Frost-Giants, amidst frozen seas and drifting glaciers, turned southward, tempted by softer climes and richer lands, and under the names of Goth, Vandal, Frank, and Norman, devastating tribes of the Scythian warriors poured their rude masses upon the early and refined civilization of the Mediterranean nations, conquering wherever they appeared and holding bravely whatever they conquered.

The Roman empire trembled and vanished before the terrible might of the long-haired Goths. They sacked Rome and threatened Constantinople: Africa, Italy, Spain, Fance, and Germany yielded to the barbaric power. Before the fifth century the Scythians had conquered the world, and every kingdom in Europe is ruled by them to this hour.

How strangely contrasted the destinies of the two great Japhetian races! What vicissitudes of fortune! The refined, lettered, oriental light-bringers to Europe—the founders of all kingdoms, the first teachers of all knowledge, the race that peopled Tyre, Carthage, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Gaul, degraded, humbled, and almost annihilated; the last poor remnant of them crushed up in the remote fastnesses

of the hills along the coast-line of Europe; step by step driven backwards to the Atlantic, as the red man of America has been driven to the Pacific, till, over the whole earth they can be found nowhere as a nation, save only in Ireland, while the rude, fierce Scandinavian hordes have risen up to be the mightiest of the earth. Greece subdued Asia, and Rome subdued Greece, but Scythia conquered Rome! The children of night and of the dark forests rule the kingdoms that rule the world.

They have given language and laws to modern empires, and at the present day are at the head of all that is most powerful, most thoughtful, most enterprising, and most learned throughout the entire globe.

The story of how the Scythian first came to the British Islands, has been preserved in the Welsh annals, which date back three thousand years. The legend runs that their ancestors, the nation of the Cimbri, wandered long over Europe, forgetting God's name, and the early wisdom. At length they crossed "the hazy sea" (the German Ocean) from the country of the pools (Belgium) and came to Britain, the sea-girt land, called by them Cambria,[1] or, first mother; and they were the first who trod the soil of Britain. There their poets and bards recovered the lost name of God, the sacred I.A.O., and the primal letters their forefathers had known, called the ten signs. And ever since they have possessed religion and literature, though the bards kept the signs secret for many ages, so that all learning might be limited to themselves.

The paramount monarch of the Cimbri nation reigned at

[1] This is the Latinized form of the original word.

London, and a state of poetry and peace long continued, till the Dragon-Aliens appeared on their coasts. The ancient Cimbri retreated into Wales, where they have ever since remained. The Picts seized on Caledonia, and the Saxons on England, until, in their turn, they were conquered by the Danes.

Ireland at that period was the most learned and powerful island of the West. Through all changes of European dynasties she retained her independence. From the Milesian to the Norman, no conqueror had trod her soil.[1]

Meanwhile England, who never yet successfully resisted an invading enemy, passed under many a foreign yoke. For five hundred years the Romans held her as a province to supply their legions with recruits, and the abject submission of the natives called forth the bitter sarcasm, that "the good of his country was the only cause in which a Briton had forgot to die."

The acquisition of Ireland was eagerly coveted by the imperial race, but though Agricola boasted he would conquer it with a single legion, and even went so far towards the completion of his design as to line all the opposite coasts of Wales with his troops, yet no Roman soldier ever set foot on Irish soil.

Rome had enough of work on hand just then, for Alaric the Goth is at her gates, and Attila, the scourge of God, is ravaging her fairest provinces. The imperial mother of Colonies can no longer hold her own or aid her children; England is abandoned to her fate, and the Irish from the

[1] The Danes were never more than a colony in Ireland.

west, the Scythian from the north, the Saxon from the east, assault, and desolate, and despoil her.

The Scythian Picts pour down on her cities, "killing, burning, and destroying." The Irish land in swarms from their *corrahs*, and "with fiery outrage and cruelty, carry, harry, and make havoc of all." Thus bandied between two insolent enemies, the English sent ambassadors to Rome "with their garments rent, and sand upon their heads," bearing that most mournful appeal of an humbled people—"to Ætius, thrice Consul: the groans of the Britons. The barbarians drive us to the sea, the sea drives us back to the barbarians; thus, between two kinds of death, we are either slaughtered or drowned."

But no help comes, for Rome herself is devastated by Hun and Vandal, and the empire is falling like a shattered world.

Thus England passed helplessly under the Saxon yoke, and so rested some hundred years; Ireland the while remaining as free from Saxon thrall as she had been from Roman rule.

Through all these centuries the current of human life still flowed westward from the unknown mysterious regions of Central Asia.

It was about the close of the eighth century, when the Scythian Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of Rome in the city of the Cæsars, that the fierce children of Thor and Odin, after having swept across Northern Europe to the limit of the land, flung their fortunes to the stormy seas, and began to earn that terrible yet romantic renown with which history and saga have invested the deeds of the Scandinavian sea kings. The raven on their black

banner was the dreaded symbol of havoc and devastation all along the sea coasts and islands of the Atlantic. In England, Saxon rule fell helplessly before the power of the new invaders, as wave after wave of the ruthless sea-ravagers dashed upon the sluggish masses of the heptarchy.

After two hundred years of protracted agony and strife, Saxon sway was annihilated for ever, and Canute the Dane reigned in England.

Meanwhile, the well-appointed fleets of Norsemen and Danes were prowling about the coast of Ireland, trying to obtain a footing on her yet unconquered soil.

When these pagan pirates first appeared on our shores, Ireland had enjoyed a Christian civilization of four centuries. The light of the true faith had been there long before it shone upon rude Saxon England. The Irish of that early era excelled in music, poetry, and many arts. They had a literature, colleges for the learned, an organized and independent hierarchy, churches and abbeys, whose ruins still attest the sense of the beautiful, as well as the piety which must have existed in the founders. Their manuscripts, dating from this period, are older than those of any other nation of Northern Europe; their music was distinguished by its pathetic beauty, and the ballads of their bards emulated in force of expression those of ancient Homer. At the time that the Scots were totally ignorant of letters, and that the princes of the heptarchy had to resort to Irish colleges for instruction in the liberal sciences, Ireland held the proud title of the "Island of Saints and Scholars;" and learned men went forth from her shores to evangelize Europe.

One Irish priest founded an abbey at Iona; another was the friend and counsellor of Charlemagne; a third, of equal celebrity, founded monasteries both in France and England. The Irish of eleven centuries ago were the apostles of Europe!

The Norsemen, or "white strangers," as the Irish called them, who swept like a hurricane over this early civilization, were fierce pagans, who respected neither God nor man. Not till three centuries after their arrival in Ireland were they converted to the Christian faith. They pillaged towns, burned churches, destroyed manuscripts of the past which no future can restore, plundered abbeys of all that learning, sanctity and civilization had accumulated of the sacred, the costly, and the beautiful, and gave the Irish nothing in return but lessons of their own barbarous ferocity. Then it was we hear how Irish mothers gave their infants food on the point of their father's sword, and at the baptism left the right arms of their babes unchristened that they might strike the more relentlessly. The Syrian and the Scythian, the children of the one Japhetian race, met at last in this *ultima thule* of Europe, after a three thousand years' divergence; and even then, though they met with fierce animosity and inextinguishable hatred, yet lingerings of a far-off ancient identity in the language, the traditions, and the superstitions of each, could still be traced in these children of the one mighty father.

Great consternation must have been in Ireland when the report spread that a fleet of sixty strange sail was in the Boyne, and that another of equal number was sailing up the Liffy. The foreigners leaped from their ships to con-

quest. Daring brought success; they sacked, burned, pillaged, murdered; put a captive king to death in his own gyves at their ships; drove the Irish before them from the ocean to the Shannon; till, with roused spirit and gathered force, the confederate kings of Ireland in return drove back the white foreigners from the Shannon to the ocean. But they had gained a footing, and inroads, with plunder and devastation, never ceased from that time till the whole eastern sea-border of Ireland was their own. There they established themselves for four centuries, holding their first conquests, but never gaining more, until they were finally expelled by the Normans.

To these red-haired pirates and marauders Dublin owes its existence as a city. The *Ath-Cliath* of the Irish, though of ancient fame, was but an aggregate of huts by the side of the Liffy, which was crossed by a bridge of hurdles. The kings of Ireland never made it a royal residence, even after Tara was cursed by St. Rodan. Their palaces were in the interior of the island; but no doubt exists that *Ath-Cliath*, the Eblana of Ptolemy, was a well-known port, the resort of merchantmen from the most ancient times. There were received the Spanish wines, the Syrian silks, the Indian gold, destined for the princes and nobles; and from thence the costly merchandize was transported to the interior.

But Dublin, with its fine plain watered by the Liffy, its noble bay, guarded by the sentinel hills, at once attracted the special notice of the bold Vikings. Their chiefs fixed their residence there, and assumed the title of Kings of Dublin, or Kings of the Dark Water, as the word may be translated. They erected a fortress on the very spot where

the Norman Castle now rules the city, and, after their conversion, a cathedral, still standing amongst us, venerable with the memories of eight hundred years.

Their descendants are with us to this day, and many families might trace back their lineage to the Danish leaders, whose names have been preserved in Irish history. Amongst sundry of "these great and valiant captains" are named Swanchean, Griffin, Albert Roe, Torbert Duff, Goslyn, Walter English, Awley, King of Denmark, from whom descend the Macaulays, made more illustrious by the modern historian of their race than by the ancient pirate king. There are also named Randal O'Himer, Algot, Ottarduff Earl, Fyn Crossagh, Torkill, Fox Wasbagg, Trevan, Baron Robert, and others; names interesting, no doubt, to those who can claim them for their ancestry.

The Norsemen having walled and fortified Dublin, though including but a mile within its circumference—whereas now the city includes ten—proceeded to fortify Dunleary, now Kingstown, in order to secure free passage to their ships. Then, from their stronghold of Dublin, they made incessant inroads upon the broad rich plains of the interior. They spread all along Meath, which received its name from them, of "Fingall" (the land of the white stranger); they devastated as far north as Armagh, as far west as the Shannon; Wexford, Waterford, and Limerick became half Danish cities. Everywhere their course was marked by barbaric spoliation. At one time it is noticed that they carried off a "great prey of women"—thus the Romans woo'd their Sabine brides; indeed the accounts in the Irish annals of the shrines they burned, the royal graves they plundered,

the treasures they pillaged, the ferocities they perpetrated, are as interminable as they are revolting.

When beaten back by the Irish princes they crouched within their walled city of Dublin, till an opportunity offered for some fresh exercise of murderous cunning, some act of audacious rapine. Thus the contest was carried on for four centuries between the colonists and the nation; mutual hatred ever increasing; the Irish kings of Leinster still claiming the rights of feudal lords over the Danes; the Danes resisting every effort made to dislodge them, though they were not unfrequently forced to pay tribute.

Sometimes the Irish kings hired them as mercenaries to assist in the civil wars which raged perennially amongst them. Sometimes there were intermarriages between the warring foes—the daughter of Brian Boro' wedded Sitric, King of the Danes of Dublin. Occasionally the Irish kings got possession of Dublin, and ravaged and pillaged in return. Once the Danes were driven forth completely from the city, and forced to take refuge upon "Ireland's Eye," the lone sea rock, since made memorable by a tragic history. Malachy, King of Meath, besieged Dublin for three days and three nights, burned the fortress, and carried off the Danish regalia; hence the allusion in Moore's song to "The Collar of Gold which he won from the proud invader." But the most terrible defeat the Danes ever sustained was at Clontarf, when ten thousand men in coats of mail were opposed to King Brian; but "the ten thousand in armour were cut in pieces, and three thousand warriors slain besides." Even the Irish children fought against the invader. The grand-child of King Brian,

a youth of fifteen, was found dead with his hand fast bound in the hair of a Dane's head, whom the child had dragged to the sea.[1]

Still the Danish colony was not uprooted, though after this defeat they grew more humble, kept within their city of Dublin, and paid tribute to the kings of Leinster, and to the paramount monarch of Ireland.

Up to this period, therefore, we see that the Irish race had no relationship whatever with their capital city; they never saw the inside of their metropolis unless they were carried there as prisoners, or that they entered with fire and sword; and, stranger still, during the many centuries of the existence of Dublin as a city, up to the present time, the Irish race have never ruled there, or held possession of the fortress of their capital.

But the time of judgment upon the Danes was approaching, though it did not come by Irish hands. As the Saxons in England fell before the Danes, so the Danes had fallen before the Normans. The Normans, a Scythian race likewise, but more beautiful, more brave, more chivalrous, courtly, and polished, than any race that had preceded them, came triumphant from Italy and France to achieve the conquest of England, which yielded almost without a struggle. One great battle, and then no more. William the Norman, or rather the Scythian Frenchman, ascends the throne of Alfred. Dane and Saxon fall helplessly beneath

[1] Hogan, the great historical sculptor of Ireland, has illustrated this era of Irish history by a fine group, heroic and poetical in idea, as well as beautiful in execution, like every work that proceeded from the gifted mind of this distinguished artist.

his feet, and his tyrannies, his robberies, his confiscations, are submitted to by the subjugated nation without an effort at resistance.

His handful of Norman nobles seized upon the lands, the wealth, the honours, the estates of the kingdom, and retain them to this hour. And justly; so noble a race as the Norman knights were made for masters. The Saxons sank at once to the level of serfs, of traders and menials, from which they have never risen, leaving England divided into a Norman aristocracy who have all the land, and a Saxon people who have all the toil; crushed by the final conquerors, they sank to be the sediment of the kingdom.

The Irish had a different destiny; for five hundred years they fought the battle for independence with the Normans, nor did their chiefs sink to be the pariahs of the kingdom, as the Saxons of England, but retain their princely pretensions to this day. The O'Connors, the O'Briens, O'Niels, Kavanaghs, O'Donnels, yield to no family in Europe in pride of blood and ancestral honours; while, by intermarriage with the Norman lords, a race was founded of Norman Irish—perhaps the finest specimens of aristocracy that Europe produced — the Geraldines at their head, loving Ireland, and of whom Ireland may be proud.

A hundred years passed by after the Norman conquest of England. Three kings of the Norman race had reigned and died, and still the conquest of Ireland was unattempted; no Norman knight had set foot on Irish soil.

The story of their coming begins with just such a domestic drama as Homer had turned into an epic two thousand years before. A fair and faithless woman, a king's daughter,

fled from her husband to the arms of a lover. All Ireland is outraged at the act. The kings assemble in conclave and denounce vengeance upon the crowned seducer, Dermot, King of Leinster.

He leagues with the Danes of Dublin, the abhorred of his countrymen, but the only allies he can find in his great need. A battle is fought in which Dermot is defeated, his castle of Ferns is burned, his kingdom is taken from him, and he himself is solemnly deposed by the confederate kings, and banished beyond seas. Roderick, King of all Ireland, is the inexorable and supreme judge. He restores the guilty wife to her husband; but the husband disdains to receive her, and she retires to a convent, where she expiates her crime and the ruin of her country by forty years of penance. The only records of her afterwards are of her good deeds. She built a nunnery at Clonmacnoise; she gave a chalice of gold to the altar of Mary, and cloth for nine altars of the Church; and then Dervorgil, the Helen of our Iliad, is heard of no more.

Dermot, her lover, went to England, seeking aid to recover his kingdom of Leinster. In a year he returns with a band of Welsh mercenaries, and marches to Dublin; but is again defeated by the confederate kings, and obliged to pay a hundred ounces of gold to O'Rourke of Breffny, "for the wrong he had done him respecting his wife," and to give up as hostage to King Roderick his only son. But while parleying with the Irish kings, Dermot was secretly soliciting English aid, and not unsuccessfully.

Memorable was the year 1170, when the renowned Strongbow, Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, and his

Norman knights, landed at Wexford to aid the banished king; and when Dermot welcomed his illustrious allies, little he thought that by his hand

> "The emerald gem of the Western world,
> Was set in the crown of a stranger."

The compact with the foreigners was sealed with his son's blood. No sooner did King Roderick hear of the Norman landing, than he ordered the royal Kavanagh, the hostage of King Dermot, to be put to death; and henceforth a doom seemed to be on the male heirs of the line of Dermot, as fatal as that which rested upon the house of Atrides.

Dermot had an only daughter remaining. He offered her in marriage to the Earl of Pembroke, with the whole Kingdom of Leinster for her dowry, so as he would help him to his revenge. After a great battle against the Danes, in which the Normans were victorious, the marriage was celebrated at Waterford.

> "Sad Eva gazed
> All round that bridal field of blood, amazed;
> Spoused to new fortunes." [1]

No record remains to us of the beauty of the bride, or in what language the Norman knight wooed her to his arms; this only we know, that Eva, Queen of Leinster in her own right, and Countess of Pembroke by marriage, can number amongst her descendants the present Queen of England. Of the bridegroom, Cambrensis tells us that he was "ruddy, freckle-faced, grey-eyed, his face feminine, his voice small,

[1] The Irish Celt to the Irish Norman, from "Poems," by Aubrey de Vere.

his neck little, yet of a high stature, ready with good words and gentle speeches."

The same authority describes Dermot from personal observation—"A tall man of stature, of a large and great body, a valiant and bold warrior, and by reason of his continued hallooing his voice was hoarse. He rather chose to be feared than to be loved. Rough and generous, hateful unto strangers, he would be against all men and all men against him."

From Waterford to Dublin was a progress of victory to Dermot and his allies, for they marched only through the Danish settlements of which Dermot was feudal lord. At Dublin King Roderick opposed them with an army. Three days the battle raged; then the Danes of Dublin, fearing Dermot's wrath, opened their gates, and offered him gold and silver in abundance if he would spare their lives; but, heedless of treaties, the Norman knights rushed in, slew the Danes in their own fortress, drove the rest to the sea; and thus ended the Danish dynasty of four centuries. Never more did they own a foot of ground throughout the length or breadth of the land. An Irish army, aided by Norman skill, had effected their complete extinction. The Kingdom of Leinster was regained for Dermot, and he and his allies placed a garrison in Dublin. This was the last triumph of the ancient race. The kingdom was lost even at the moment it seemed regained. That handful of Scythian warriors, scarcely visible amid Dermot's great Irish army, are destined to place the yoke upon the neck of ancient Ireland.

The brave Roderick gathered together another army,

and, with sixty thousand men, laid siege to Dublin, O'Rourke of Breffny aiding him. They were repulsed. O'Rourke was taken prisoner, and hanged with his head downwards, then beheaded and the head stuck on one of the centre gates of the castle, "a spectacle of intense pity to the Irish;" and Roderick retired into Connaught to recruit more forces.

There is something heroic and self-devoted in the efforts which, for eighteen years, were made by Roderick against the Norman power. Brave, learned, just, and enlightened beyond his age, he alone of all the Irish princes saw the direful tendency of the Norman inroad. All the records of his reign prove that he was a wise and powerful monarch. He had a fleet on the Shannon, the like of which had never been seen before. He built a royal residence in Connaught, the ruins of which are still existing to attest its former magnificence, so far beyond all structures of the period, that it was known in Ireland as the beautiful house. He founded a chair of literature at Armagh, and left an endowment in perpetuity, to maintain it for the instruction of the youth of Ireland and Scotland. A great warrior, and a fervent patriot, his first effort, when he obtained the crown, was to humble the Danish power. Dublin was forced to pay him tribute, and he was inaugurated there with a grandeur and luxury unknown before. When Dermot outraged morality, he deposed and banished him. When Dermot further sinned, and traitorously brought over the foreigner, Roderick, with stern justice, avenged the father's treason by the son's life. His own son, the heir of his kingdom, leagued with the Normans, and was found fighting in their ranks.

Roderick, like a second Brutus, unpitying, yet heroically just, when the youth was brought a prisoner before him, himself ordered his eyes to be put out. His second son also turned traitor, and covenanted with the Normans to deprive his father of the kingdom. Then Roderick, surrounded by foreign foes and domestic treachery, quitted Connaught, and went through the provinces of Ireland, seeking to stir up a spirit as heroic as his own in the hearts of his countrymen. Soon after his unworthy son was killed in some broil, and Roderick resumed the kingly functions; but while all the other Irish princes took the oath of fealty to King Henry, he kept aloof beyond the Shannon, equally disdaining treachery or submission. His last son, the only one worthy of him, being defeated in a battle by the Normans, slew himself in despair.

The male line of his house was now extinct; the independence of his country was threatened; Norman power was growing strong in the land, and his continued efforts for eighteen years to arouse the Irish princes to a sense of their danger were unavailing. Wearied, disgusted, heart-broken, it may be, he voluntarily laid down the sceptre and the crown, and retired to the monastery of Cong, where he became a monk, and thus, in penance and seclusion, passed ten years—the weary ending of a fated life.

He died there, twenty-eight years after the Norman invasion, "after exemplary penance, victorious over the world and the devil;" and the chroniclers record his title upon his grave where he is laid—

"Roderick O'Connor,
King of all Ireland, both of the Irish and English."

Seven centuries have passed since then, yet even now, which of us could enter the beautiful ruins of that ancient abbey, wander through the arched aisles tapestried by ivy, or tread the lonely silent chapel, once vocal with prayer and praise, without sad thoughts of sympathy for the fate of the last monarch of Ireland, and perchance grave thoughts likewise over the destiny of a people who, on that grave of native monarchy, independence, and nationality, have as yet written no RESURGAM.

Exactly ten months after the Normans took possession of Dublin, King Dermot, "by whom a trembling sod was made of all Ireland, died of an insufferable and unknown disease —for he became putrid while living—without a will, without penance, without the body of Christ, without unction, as his evil deeds deserved."

Immediately the Earl of Pembroke assumed the title of King of Leinster in right of his wife Eva. Whereupon Henry of England grew alarmed at the independence of his nobility, and hastened over to assert his claims as lord paramount. To his remonstrances Strongbow answered, "What I won was with the sword; what was given me I give you." An agreement was then made by which Strongbow retained Dublin, while Henry appointed what nobles he chose over the other provinces of Leinster.

When the first Norman monarch landed amongst us, the memorable 18th day of October, 1172, no resistance was offered by any party; no battle was fought. The Irish chiefs were so elated at the Danish overthrow, that they even volunteered oaths of fealty to the foreign prince who had been in some sort their deliverer. Calmly, as in a

state pageant, Henry proceeded from Wexford to Dublin; his route lay only through the conquered Danish possessions, now the property of the Countess Eva; there was no fear therefore of opposition. On reaching the city, "he caused a royal palace to be built, very curiously contrived of smooth wattels, after the manner of the country, and there, with the kings and princes of Ireland, did keep Christmas with great solemnity," on the very spot where now stands St. Andrew's Church.

King Henry remained six months in Ireland, the longest period which a foreign monarch has ever passed amongst us, and during that time he never thought of fighting a battle with the Irish. As yet, the whole result of Norman victories was the downfall of the Danes, in which object the Irish had gladly assisted. Strongbow and Eva reigned peaceably in our capital. Henry placed governors over the other Danish cities, and in order that Dublin, from which the Danes had been expelled, might be repeopled, he made a present of our fair city to the good people of Bristol.

Accordingly a colony from that town, famed for deficiency in personal attractions, came over and settled here; but thirty years after, the Irish, whose instincts of beauty were no doubt offended by the rising generation of Bristolians, poured down from the Wicklow hills upon the ill-favoured colony, and made a quick ending of them by a general massacre.

In a fit of penitence, also, for the murdered A Becket, Henry founded the Abbey of Thomas Court, from which Thomas Street derives its name, and then the excommunicated king quitted Ireland, leaving it unchanged, save that

Henry the Norman held the posssessions of Torkil the Dane, and Dublin, from a Danish, had become a Norman city. Five hundred years more had to elapse before English jurisdiction extended beyond the ancient Danish pale, and a Cromwell or a William of Nassau was needed for the final conquest of Ireland, as well as for the redemption of England.

Nothing can be more absurd than to talk of a Saxon conquest of Ireland. The Saxons, an ignorant, rude, inferior race, could not even maintain their ascendency in England. They fell before the superior power, intelligence, and ability of the Norman, and the provinces of Ireland that fell to the first Norman nobles were in reality not gained by battles, but by the intermarriage of Norman lords with the daughters of Irish kings. Hence it was that in right of their wives the Norman nobles early set up claims independent of the English crown, and the hereditary rights, being transmitted through each generation, were perpetually tempting the Norman aristocracy into rebellion. English supremacy was as uneasily borne by the De Lacys, the Geraldines, the Butlers, and others of the Norman stock, as by the O'Connors, the Kavanaghs, the O'Neils, or the O'Briens. The great Richard De Burgho married Odierna, grand-daughter of Cathal Crovdearg, king of Connaught. Hence the De Burghos assumed the title of Lords of Connaught.

King Roderick, as we have said, left no male issue. His kingdom descended to his daughter, who married the Norman knight, Hugo de Lacy. Immediately De Lacy set up a claim as independent prince in right of his wife,

assumed legal state, took the title of King of Meath, and appeared in public with a golden crown upon his head, and so early as twenty-five years after the invasion, John de Courcy and the son of this De Lacy marched *against* the English of Leinster and Munster. Many a romance could be woven of the destiny and vicissitudes of this great race, half Irish, half Norman; independent princes by the one side, and English subjects by the other.

The great Earl of Pembroke lived but a few years after his capture of Dublin. The Irish legends say that St. Bridget killed him. However, he and Eva had no male heir, and only one daughter, named Isabel, after the Earl's mother, who was also aunt to the reigning king of Scotland.

This young girl was sole heiress of Leinster and of her father's Welsh estates. Richard Cœur de Lion took her to his court at London, and she became his ward. In due time she married William Marshall, called the great Earl, hereditary Earl Marshal of England, and Earl of Pembroke and Leinster, in right of his wife. High in office and favour with the king, we read that he carried the sword of state before Richard at his coronation, and as a monument of his piety, he left Tintern Abbey, in the County Wexford, erected by him on his wife's property.

Isabel and Earl William had five sons and five daughters. The five sons, William, Walter, Gilbert, Anselm, and Richard (Isabel called no son of hers after the royal traitor Dermot, her grandfather) inherited the title in succession, and all died childless. We have said there was a doom upon Dermot's male posterity.

The inheritance was then divided between the five

daughters, each of whom received a province for a dower. Carlow, Kilkenny, the Queen's County, Wexford, and Kildare were the five portions. Maud, the eldest, married the Earl of Norfolk, who became Earl Marshal of England in right of his wife.

Isabel, the second, married the Earl of Gloucester, and her granddaughter, Isabel also, was mother to the great Robert Bruce, who was therefore great-great-great-grandson of Eva and Strongbow. Eva, the third daughter married the Lord de Breos, and from a daughter of hers, named Eva likewise, descended Edward the Fourth, King of England, through whose granddaughter Margaret Queen of Scotland, daughter of Henry the Seventh, the present reigning family of England claim their right to the throne. Through two lines, therefore, our Most Gracious Majesty can trace back her pedigree to Eva the Irish princess.

Joan, whose portions were Wexford, married Lord Valentia, half-brother to King Henry the Third, and the male line failing, the inheritance was divided between two daughters, from one of whom the Talbots, Earls of Shrewsbury, inherit their Wexford estates.

From Sybil, the youngest, who married the Earl of Ferrars and Derby, descended the Earls of Winchester, the Lords Mortimer, and other noble races. She had seven daughters, who all married Norman lords, so that scarcely a family could be named of the high and ancient English nobility, whose wealth has not been increased by the estates of Eva, the daughter of King Dermot; and thus it came to pass that Leinster fell by marriage and inheritance, not by conquest, into the possession of the great Norman families,

who, of course, acknowledged the King of England as their sovereign; and the English monarchs assumed thenceforth the title of Lords of Ireland—a claim which they afterwards enforced over the whole country.

The destiny of the descendants of De Lacy and King Roderick's daughter was equally remarkable. They had two sons, Hugh and Walter, who, before they were twenty-one, threw off English allegiance, and set up as independent princes. To avoid the wrath of King John they fled to France, and took refuge in an abbey, where, disguised as menials, the two young noblemen found employment in garden-digging, preparing mud and bricks, and similar work. By some chance the abbot suspected the disguise, and finally detected the princes in the supposed peasants. He used his knowledge of their secret to obtain their pardon from King John, and Hugh De Lacy was created Earl of Ulster. He left an only daughter, his sole heir. She married a De Burgho, who, in right of his wife, became Earl of Ulster, and from them descended Ellen, wife of Robert Bruce, King of Scotland. It is singular that the mother of Robert Bruce should have been descended from Eva, and his wife from King Roderick's daughter. The granddaughter of Robert Bruce, the Princess Margery, married the Lord High Steward of Scotland, and through her the Stuarts claimed the crown. From thence it is easy to trace how the royal blood of the three kingdoms meet in the reigning family of England. Another descendant of the Earls of Ulster (an only daughter likewise) married Lionel, Duke of Clarence, son of Edward the Third, who, in the right of his wife, became Earl of Ulster and Lord of Connaught,

and these titles finally merged in the English crown in the person of Edward the Fourth. From all these genealogies one fact may be clearly deduced, that the present representative of the royal Irish races of Eva and Roderick, and the lineal heiress of their rights, is Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

The proud and handsome race of Norman Irish, that claimed descent from these intermarriages, were the nobles, of whom it was said, "They were more Irish than the Irish themselves." The disposition to become independent of England was constantly manifested in them. They publicly asserted their rights, renounced the English dress and language, and adopted Irish names. Thus Sir Ulick Burke, ancestor of Lord Clanricarde, became MacWilliam Oughter (or upper), and Sir Edmond Albanagh, progenitor of the Earl of Mayo, became MacWilliam Eighter (or lower). Richard, son of the Earl of Norfolk, and grandson of Eva, set up a claim to be independent King of Leinster, and was slain by the English. We have seen that Walter and Hugh De Lacy, grandsons of Roderick, were in open rebellion against King John. A hundred years later, two of the same race, named Walter and Hugh likewise, were proclaimed traitors for aiding the army of Robert Bruce, who claimed the crown of Ireland for his brother Edward, and the two De Lacys were found dead by the side of Edward Bruce at the great battle of Dundalk, where the Scotch forces were overthrown.

Once, even the Geraldines and the Fitzmaurices took prisoner the Justiciary of Dublin, as the Lord-Lieutenant of that day was named. Meanwhile the Irish princes of

the West retained their independence; sometimes at feud, sometimes in amity with the English of the Eastern coast. We read that "the English of Dublin invited Hugh, King of Connaught, to a conference, and began to deal treacherously with him; but William Mareschall, his friend, coming in with his forces, rescued him, in despite of the English, from the middle of the Court, and escorted him to Connaught." Both races were equally averse to the domination of the English crown. The Geraldines and Butlers, the De Burghos and De Lacys, were as intractable as the O'Connors of Connaught, or the O'Neils of Tyrone; even more so. The Great O'Neil submitted to Elizabeth; but two hundred years later the Geraldines had still to add the name of another martyr for liberty to the roll of their illustrious ancestors.

Frequently the Normans fought amongst themselves as fiercely as if opposed to the Irish. The Earl of Ulster, a De Burgho, the same who is recorded to have given the first entertainment at Dublin Castle, took his kinsman, Walter Burke, prisoner, and had him starved to death in his own castle; a tragedy which might have been made as memorable as that of Ugolino in the *Torre del Fame*, had there been a Dante in Ireland to record it. For this act the kinsmen of Walter Burke murdered the Earl of Ulster on the Lord's Day, as he was kneeling at his prayers, and cleft his head in two with a sword.

It was unfortunate for Ireland that her Irish princes were so unconquerable, and that her Norman lords should have have caught the infection of resistance to the crown. Eight hundred years ago the Saxons of England peaceably settled

down with the Normans to form one nation, with interests and objects identical.

The Norman conquerors, better fitted, perhaps, for rulers than any other existing in Europe, established at once a strong, vigorous government in England. The Kings, as individuals, may have been weak or tyrannous, but there was a unity of purpose, a sense of justice, and a vigour of will existing in the ruling class that brought the ruled speedily under the order and discipline of laws. Not a century and a half had elapsed from the Conquest before Magna Charta and representation by Parliament secured the liberty of the people against the caprices of kings; and the Norman temperament which united in a singular degree the instincts of loyalty with the love of freedom, became the hereditary national characteristic of Englishmen. But Ireland never, at any time, comprehended the word nationality. From of old it was broken up into fragments, ruled by chiefs whose principal aim was mutual destruction. There was no unity, therefore no strength.

If, at the time of the Norman invasion, a king of the race had settled here as in England, the Irish would gradually have become a nation under one ruler, in place of being an aggregate of warring tribes; but for want of this chief corner-stone the Norman nobles themselves became but isolated chiefs—new petty kings added to the old—each for himself, none for the country. It was contrary to all natural laws that the proud Irish princes, with the traditions of their race going back two thousand years, should at once serve with love and loyalty a foreign king whose face they never saw and from whom they derived no benefits. And

thus it was that five hundred years elapsed, from Henry Plantagenet to William of Nassau, before Ireland was finally adjusted in her subordinate position to the English crown.

Meanwhile the Danish Dublin was fast rising into importance as the Norman city, the capital of the English pale. Within that circle the English laws, language, manners, and religion were implicitly adopted; without, there was a fierce, warlike, powerful people, the ancient lords of the soil, but with them the citizens of Dublin had no affinity; and the object of the English rulers was to keep the two races as distinct as possible. Amongst other enactments tending to obliterate any feeling of kindred which might exist, the inhabitants of the pale were ordered to adopt English surnames, derived from everything which by the second commandment we are forbidden to worship. Hence arose the tribes of fishes—cod, haddock, plaice, salmon, gurnet, gudgeon, &c.; and of birds—crow, sparrow, swan, pigeon; and of trades, as carpenter, smith, baker, mason; and of colours—the blacks, whites, browns, and greens, which in Dublin so copiously replace the grand old historic names of the provinces. Determined also on annihilating the picturesque, at least in the individual, lest the outward symbol might be taken for an inward affinity, the long flowing hair and graceful mantle, after the Irish fashion, were forbidden to be worn within the pale.

Neither was the Irish language tolerated within the English jurisdiction, for which Holingshed gives good reason, after this fashion—"And here," he says, "some snappish carpers will snuffingly snib me for debasing the Irish lan-

guage, but my short discourse tendeth only to this drift, that it is not expedient that the Irish tongue should be so universally gagled in the English pale; for where the country is subdued, there the inhabitants should be ruled by the same laws that the conqueror is governed, wear the same fashion of attire with which the victor is vested, and speak the same language which the victor parleth; and if any of these lack, doubtless the conquest limpeth." The English tongue, however, seems to have been held in utter contempt and scorn by the Irish allies of the pale. After the submission of the Great O'Neil, the last who held the title of king in Ireland, which he exchanged for that of Earl of Tyrone, as a mark and seal of his allegiance to Queen Elizabeth, "One demanded merrilie," says Holingshed, "why O'Neil would not frame himself to speak English? 'What,' quoth the other in a rage, 'thinkest thou it standeth with O'Neil his honour to writhe his mouth in clattering English.'"

As regarded religion, the English commanded the most implicit obedience to the Pope, under as strict and severe penalties as, five hundred years later, they enacted against those who acknowledged his authority. One provision of the ancient oath imposed upon the subjugated Irish was—"You acknowledge yourself to be of the Mother Church of Rome, now professed by all Christians." But, that the Irish of that era little heeded papal or priestly ordinances may be inferred from the fact that, during the wars of Edward Bruce, the English complained that their Irish auxiliaries were more exhausting than the Scots, as they ate meat all the time of Lent; and it is recorded, that in 1133, when

the Leinster Irish rose against the English, "they set fire to everything, even the churches, and burned the church of Dunleary, with eighty persons in it, and even when the priest in his sacred vestments, and carrying the Host in his hands, tried to get out, they drove him back with their spears and burned him. For this they were excommunicated by a Papal Bull, and the country was put under an interdict. But they despised these things, and again wasted the county of Wexford." [1]

The energetic and organizing spirit of the Normans was, however, evidenced by better deeds than those we have named. Courts of law were established in Dublin, a mayor and corporation instituted, and Parliaments were convened after the English fashion. Within fifty years after the Norman settlement, the lordly pile of Dublin Castle rose upon the site of the old Danish fortress, built, indeed, to overawe the Irish, as William the Conqueror built the tower of London to overawe the English; yet, by Norman hands, the first regal residence was given to our metropolis. St. Patrick's Cathedral was next erected by the colonists, and gradually our fair city rose into beauty and importance through Norman wealth and Norman skill. From henceforth, the whole interest of Irish history centres in the chief city of the pale, and the history of Dublin becomes the history of English rule in Ireland. For centuries its position was that of a besieged city in the midst of a hostile country; for centuries it resisted the whole force of the native race; and finally triumphantly crushed, annihilated, and revenged every effort made for Irish independence.

[1] Grace's Annals. Rev. R. Butler's translation.

In truth, Dublin is a right royal city, and never fails in reverential respect towards her English mother.

Many great names are associated with the attempt to write a history of Dublin. The work in all ages was laborious; there were no printed books to consult, and the records of Ireland, as Hooker complains three hundred years ago, "were verie slenderlie and disorderlie kept." Whitelaw's work, though it employed two editors ten hours a day for ten years, yet goes no farther than a description of the public buildings; but the object of Mr. Gilbert's history is distinct from all that precedes it. It is from the decaying streets and houses that he disentombs great memories, great fragments of past life. It is not a mere record of Ionic pillars, Corinthian capitals, or Doric pediments he gives us. Whitelaw has supplied whole catalogues of these; but records of the human life, that has throbbed through the ancient dwellings of our city century after century; of the vicissitudes of families, to be read in their ruined mansions; of the vast political events which in some room, in some house, on some particular night, branded the stigmata deeper on the country; or the tragedies of great hopes crushed, young blood shed, victims hopelessly sacrificed, which have made some street, some house, some chamber, for ever sacred.

The labours of such an undertaking are manifest; yet none can appreciate them fully who has not known what it is to spend days, weeks, months buried in decaying parchments, endless pipe-rolls, worm-eaten records, dusty deeds and leases, excavating some fact, or searching for some link necessary for the completion of a tale, or the elucidation of a truth.

Mr. Gilbert tells us that twelve hundred statutes and enactments of the Anglo-Irish Parliament still remain unpublished. From these and such-like decayed and decaying manuscripts, ancient records which have become almost hieroglyphics to the present age, he has gathered the life-history of an ancient city; he has made the stones to speak, and evoked the shadows of the past to fill up the outline of a great historical picture.

Fifty, even twenty years hence, the production of such a work would be impossible; the ancient records will probably have perished; the ancient houses, round which the curious may yet gather, will have fallen to the ground; and the ancient race, who cherished in their hearts the legends of the past with the fidelity of priests, and the fervour of bards, will have almost passed away.

Dublin is fortunate, therefore, in finding an historian endowed with the ability, the energetic literary industry, the untiring spirit of research, and the vast amount of antiquarian knowledge necessary for the production of so valuable a work, before records perish, mansions fall, or races vanish.

In a history illustrated by human lives and deeds, and localized in the weird old streets, once the proudest, now the meanest of our city, many a family will find an ancestral shadow starting suddenly to light, trailing long memories with it of departed fashion, grandeur, and magnificence.

Few amongst us who tread the Dublin of the present in all its beauty, think of the Dublin of the past in all its contrasted insignificance. True, the eternal features are the same; the landscape setting of the city is coeval with crea-

tion. Tyrian, Dane, and Norman have looked as we look, and with hearts as responsive to Nature's loveliness, upon the emerald plains, the winding rivers, the hills draperied in violet and gold, the mountain gorges, thunder-riven, half veiled by the foam of the waterfall, and the eternal ocean encircling all; scenes where God said a city should arise, and the mountain and the ocean are still, as of old, the magnificent heritage of beauty conferred on our metropolis.

But the early races, whether from southern sea or northern plain, did little to aid the beauty of nature with the products of human intellect. Dublin, under the Danish rule, consisted only of a fortress, a church, and one rude street. Under the rule of the Normans, those great civilizers of the western world, those grand energetic organizers, temple and tower builders, it rose gradually into a beautiful capital, the chief city of Ireland, the second city of the empire. At first the rudamental metropolis gathered round the castle, as nebulæ round a central sun, and from this point it radiated westward and southward; the O'Briens on the south, the O'Connors on the west, the O'Neils on the north, perpetually hovering on the borders, but never able to regain the city, never able to dislodge the brave Norman garrison who had planted their banners on the castle walls. In that castle, during the seven hundred years of its existence, no Irishman of the old race has ever held rule for a single hour.

And what a history it has of tragedies and splendours; crowned and discrowned monarchs flit across the scene, and tragic destinies, likewise, may be recorded of many a viceroy!

Piers Gravestone, Lord-Lieutenant of King Edward, murdered; Roger Mortimer—"The Gentle Mortimer"—hanged at Tyburn; the Lord Deputy of King Richard II. murdered by the O'Briens; whereupon the King came over to avenge his death, just a year before he himself was so ruthtessly murdered at Pomfret Castle. Two viceroys died of the plague; how many more were plagued to death, history leaves unrecorded; one was beheaded at Drogheda; three were beheaded on Tower Hill. Amongst the names of illustrious Dublin rulers may be found those of Prince John, the boy Deputy of thirteen; Prince Lionel, son of Edward III., who claimed Clare in right of his wife, and assumed the title of Clarence from having conquered it from the O'Briens.

The great Oliver Cromwell was the Lord-Lieutenant of the Parliament, and he in turn appointed his son Henry to succeed him. Dire are the memories connected with Cromwell's reign here, both to his own party and to Ireland. Ireton died of the plague after the siege of Limerick; General Jones died of the plague after the surrender of Dungarvon; a thousand of Cromwell's men died of the plague before Waterford. The climate, in its effect upon English constitutions, seems to be the great Nemesis of Ireland's wrongs.

Strange scenes, dark, secret, and cruel, have been enacted in that gloomy pile. No one has told the full story yet. It will be a Ratcliffe romance of dungeons and treacheries, of swift death or slow murder. God and St. Mary were invoked in vain for the luckless Irish prince or chieftain that was caught in that Norman stronghold; but that was in the

old time—long, long ago. Now the castle courts are crowded only with loyal and courtly crowds, gathered to pay homage to the illustrious successor of a hundred viceroys.

The strangest scene, perhaps, in the annals of vice-royalty, was when Lord Thomas Fitzgerald (Silken Thomas), son of the Earl of Kildare, and Lord-Lieutenant in his father's absence, took up arms for Irish independence. He rode through the city with seven score horsemen, in shirts of mail and silken fringes on their head-pieces (hence the name Silken Thomas), to St. Mary's Abbey, and there entering the council chamber, he flung down the sword of state upon the table, and bade defiance to the king and his ministers; then hastening to raise an army, he laid siege to Dublin Castle, but with no success. Silken Thomas and his five uncles were sent to London, and there executed; and sixteen Fitzgeralds were hanged and quartered at Dublin. By a singular fatality, no plot laid against Dublin Castle ever succeeded; though to obtain possession of this foreign fortress was the paramount wish of all Irish rebel leaders. This was the object with Lord Maguire and his papists, with Lord Edward Fitzgerald and his republicans, with Emmet and his enthusiasts, with Smith O'Brien and his nationalists—yet they all failed. Once only, during seven centuries, the green flag waved over Dublin Castle, with the motto—"NOW OR NEVER! NOW AND FOR EVER!" It was when Tyrconnel held it for King James.

In the ancient stormy times of Norman rule, the nobility naturally gathered round the Castle. Skinner's Row was the "May Fair" of mediæval Dublin. Hoey's Court, Castle Street, Cook Street, Fishamble Street, Bridge Street,

Werburgh Street, High Street, Golden Lane, Back Lane, &c., were the fashionable localities inhabited by lords and bishops, chancellors and judges; and Thomas Street was the grand prado where viceregal pomp and Norman pride were oftenest exhibited. A hundred years ago the Lord Lieutenant was entertained at a ball by Lord Mountjoy in Back Lane. Skinner's Row was distinguished by the residence of the great race of the Geraldines, called "Carbrie House," which from them passed to the Dukes of Ormond, and after many vicissitudes, the palace from which Silken Thomas went forth to give his young life for Irish independence, fell into decay, "and on its site now stand the houses known as 6, 7, and 8, Christ Church Place, in the lower stories of which still exist some of the old oak beams of the Carbrie House."

In Skinner's Row also, two hundred years ago, dwelt Sir Robert Dixon, Mayor of Dublin, who was knighted at his own house there by the Lord-Lieutenant, the afterwards unfortunate Strafford. The house has fallen to ruins, but the vast property conferred on him by Charles I. for his good services, has descended to the family of Sir Kildare Burrowes, of Kildare. In those brilliant days of Skinner's Row, it was but seventeen feet wide, and the pathways but one foot broad. All its glories have vanished now; even the name no longer exists; yet the remains of residences once inhabited by the magnificent Geraldines and Butlers can still be traced.

Every stone throughout this ancient quarter of Dublin has a history. In Cook Street Lord Maguire was arrested at midnight, under circumstances very similar to the capture

of Lord Edward Fitzgerald; and "to commemorate this capture in the parish it was the annual custom, down to the year 1829, to toll the bells of St. Andrew's Church at twelve o'clock on the night of the 22nd of October."

In Bridge Street great lords and peers of the realm resided. The Marquis of Antrim, the Duke of Marlborough's father; Westenra, the Dutch merchant who founded the family afterwards ennobled, and others. It was the Merrion Square of the day. In Bridge Street the rebellion of '98 was organized at the house of Oliver Bond; and one night Major Swan, led by Reynolds the informer, seized twelve gentlemen there, all of whom were summarily hanged as rebels. Castle Street was the focus of the rebellion of 1641; Sir Phelim O'Neil and Lord Maguire had their residences there, and concocted together how to seize the Castle, destroy all the lords and council, and re-establish Popery in Ireland. But a more useful man than either lived there also—Sir James Ware, whose indefatigable ardour in the cause of Irish literature caused him to collect, with great trouble and expense, a vast number of Irish manuscripts, which, after passing through many vicissitudes, are now deposited in the British Museum. The French family of Latouche came to Castle Street about one hundred years ago, and one of them, in 1778, upheld the shattered credit of the Government by a loan of £20,000 to the Lord-Lieutenant. Fishamble Street has historical and classic memoirs, and traditions of Handel consecrate this now obscure locality.

Handel spent a year in Dublin. His "Messiah" was composed there, and first performed for the bene-

fit of Mercer's Hospital. How content he was with his reception is expressed in a letter to a friend. "I cannot," he says, "sufficiently express the kind treatment I receive here, but the politeness of this generous nation cannot be unknown to you."

Dublin Quays are likewise illustrated by great names. On Usher's Quay may still be seen the once magnificent Moira House, the princely residence of Lord Moira, afterwards Marquis of Hastings, Governor-General of India. A hundred years ago it was the Holland House of Dublin, sparkling with all the wit, splendour, rank, and influence of the metropolis. The decorations were unsurpassed in the kingdom for beauty and grandeur. The very windows were inlaid with mother-o'-pearl.

After the Union, the family in disgust quitted Ireland; Moira House was left tenantless for some years, and then finally was sold for the use of the pauper poor of Dublin. The decorations were removed, the beautiful gardens turned into offices, the upper storey of the edifice was taken off, and the entire building pauperized as much as possible to suit its inmates and its title—"The Mendicity."

In the good old times the Lord Mayor treated the Lord-Lieutenant to a new play every Christmas, when the Corporation acted Mysteries upon the stage in Hoggin Green, where the College now stands. The Mysteries were on various subjects. In one, the tailors had orders to find Pilate and his wife clothed accordingly; the butchers were to supply the tormentors; the mariners and vintners represented Noah. At that period the Lord-Lieutenants held their court at Kilmainham, or Thomas Court, for Dublin

Castle was not made a viceregal residence until the reign of Elizabeth. The parliaments, too, were ambulatory. Sometimes they met in the great aisle of Christ Church, that venerable edifice whose echoes have been destined to give back such conflicting sounds. What changes in its ritual and its worshippers! What scenes have passed before its high altar since first erected by the Danish bishop, whose body, in pallium and mitre, lay exposed to view but a few years since, after a sleep of eight hundred years. Irish kings and Norman conquerors have trod the aisles. There Roderick was inaugurated, the last king of Ireland; there Strongbow sleeps, first of the Norman conquerors, and, until the middle of the last century, all payments were made at his tomb, as if in him alone, living or dead, the citizens had their strength; there Lambert Simnel was crowned with a crown taken from the head of the Virgin Mary; there Cromwell worshipped before he went forth to devastate; there the last Stuart knelt in prayer before he threw the last stake at the Boyne for an empire; and there William of Nassau knelt in gratitude for the victory, with the crown upon his head, forgotten by James in his ignominious flight.

And how many rituals have risen up to heaven from that ancient altar, each *anathema maranatha* to the other—the solemn chants of the early church; the gorgeous ritual of the mass; in Elizabeth's time, the simple liturgy of the English Church in the English tongue; this, too, was prohibited in its turn, and for ten years the Puritans wailed and howled against kings and liturgies in the ancient edifice; there the funeral oration for the death of Cromwell

was pronounced, entitled, "*Threni Hibernici*, or, Ireland sympathizing with England for the loss of their Josiah (Oliver Cromwell)." Once again rose the incense of the mass while King James was amongst us; but William quenched the lights on the altar, and established once more the English Liturgy in its simplicity and beauty. But so little, during all these changes, had the Irish to do with the cathedral of their capital, that by an Act passed in 1380 no Irishman was permitted to hold in it any situation or office; and so strictly was the law enforced, that Sir John Stevenson was the first Irishman admitted, as even vicar-choral.

Many are the themes of interest to be found in Mr. Gilbert's "History of Dublin," concerning those ancient times when Sackville Street was a marsh, Merrion Square an exhausted quarry, the undulations so beautiful in its present verdant state being but the accident of excavation; when St. Stephen's Green, with its ten fine Irish acres, was a compound of meadow, quagmire, and ditch; when Mountjoy Square was a howling wilderness, and North Georges Street and Summer Hill were far away in the country, and when the Danes, rudely expelled by Norman swords from the south of the Liffy, were stealing over the river to found a settlement on the north side.

Our fathers have told us of Dublin in later times, before the Union, when a hundred lords and two hundred commoners enriched and enlivened our city with their wealth and magnificence. Dublin was then at the summit of its glory; but when the colonists sold their parliament to England, and the Lords and Commons vanished, and their

mansions became hospitals and poor-houses, and all wealth, power, influence, and magnificence were transferred to the loved mother country, then the "City of the Dark Water" sank into very pitiable insignificance. The proud Norman spirit of independence was broken at last, and there was no great principle to replace it. Having no large sympathies with the Irish nation, no idea of country, nationality, or any other grand word by which is expressed the resolve of self-reliant men to be self-governed, the colonists became petty, paltry, and selfish in aim; imitative in manners and feelings; apathetic, even antagonistic to all national advance; bound to England by helpless fear and servile hope; content so as they could rest under her great shadow, secure from the mysterious horrors of Popery, preserved in the blessing of a church establishment, and allowed to worship even the shadow of transcendent Majesty. Then Dublin ambition was satisfied and happy; for there is no word so instinctively abhorrent, so invincibly opposed to all the prejudices of Dublin society, as patriotism.

From this cursory glance over the antecedents of our metropolis, the cause of her anti-Irishism is plainly deducible from the fact, that at no epoch was Dublin an Irish city. The inhabitants are a blended race, descended of Danes, Normans, Saxon settlers, and mongrel Irish. The country of their affections is England. They have known no other mother. With the proud old princes and chiefs of the ancient Irish race they have no more affinity than (to use Mr. Macaulay's illustration) the English of Calcutta with the nation of Hindustan, and from this colonial

position a certain Dublin idiosyncrasy of character has resulted, which makes the capital distinct in feeling from the rest of Ireland.

Meanwhile the destiny of the ancient race is working out, not in happiness or prosperity, but in stern, severe discipline. Unchanged and unchangeable they remain, so far as change is effected by impulses arising from within. "Two thousand years," says Moore, "have passed over the hovel of the Irish peasant in vain." Such as they were when the first light of history rested on them, they are now; indolent and dreamy, patient and resigned as fatalists, fanatical as Bonzees, implacable as Arabs, cunning as Greeks, courteous as Spaniards, superstitious as savages, loving as children, clinging to the old home and the old sod and the old families with a tenderness that is always beautiful, sometimes heroic; loving to be ruled, with veneration in excess; ready to die like martyrs for a creed, a party, or the idol of the hour, but incapable of extending their sympathies beyond the family or the clan; content with the lowest place in Europe; stationary amid progression; isolated from the European family; without power or influence; lazily resting in the past while the nations are wrestling in the present for the future. Children of the ocean, yet without commerce; idle by thousands, yet without manufactures; gifted with quick intellect and passionate hearts, yet literature and art die out amongst them for want of aid or sympathy; without definite aims, without energy or the earnestness, which is the vital life of heroic deeds; dark and blind through prejudice and ignorance, they can neither resist nobly nor endure wisely; chafing in bondage, yet

their epileptic fits of liberty are marked only by wild excesses, and end only in sullen despair.

Yet, it was not in the providence of God that the fine elements of humanity in such a people should still continue to waste and stagnate during centuries of inaction, while noble countries and fruitful lands, lying silent since creation, were waiting the destined toilers and workers, who, by the sweat of the brow, shall change them to living empires.

Two terrible calamities fell upon Ireland—famine and pestilence; and by these two dread ministers of God's great purposes, the Irish race were uprooted and driven forth to fulfil their appointed destiny. A million of our people emigrated; a million of our people died under these judgments of God. Seventeen millions worth of property passed from time-honoured names into the hands of strangers. The echoes of the old tongue—call it Pelasgian, Phœnician, Celtic, Irish, what you will, still the oldest in Europe, is dying out at last along the stony plains of Mayo and the wild sea-cliffs of the storm-rent western shore. Scarcely a million and a half are left of people too old to emigrate, amidst roofless cabins and ruined villages, who speak that language now. Exile, confiscation, or death, was the final fate written on the page of history for the much-enduring children of Ireland. One day they may reassert themselves in the new world, or in other lands. Australia, with its skies of beauty and its pavement of gold, may be given to them as America to the Saxon, but how low must a nation have fallen at home when even famine and plague come to be welcomed as the levers of progression and

social elevation. Some wise purpose of God's providence lies, no doubt, at the reverse side, but we have not yet turned the leaf.

The ancient race who, thousands of years ago, left the cradle of the sun to track him to the ocean, are now flung on the coast of another hemisphere to begin once more their destined westward march; and like the Israelites of old, they, too, might tell in that new country: "A Syrian ready to perish was our father!"

They fled across the Atlantic like a drift of autumn leaves — "pestilence-stricken multitudes" — and the sea was furrowed by the dead as the plague-ships passed along.

One would say a doom had been laid upon our people—the wandering Io of humanity—a destiny of weeping and unrest.

Of old the kings at Tara sat throned with their faces to the west: was it a symbol or a prophecy of the future of their nation? when from every hill in Ireland could be seen—

> "The remnant of our people
> Sweeping westward, wild, and woful,
> Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
> Like the withered leaves of autumn."

From the Atlantic to the Pacific, where the Rocky Mountains bar like a portal the land of gold—through the islands of the Southern Ocean to the great desolate world of Australia, seeking as it were the lost home of their fathers, and doomed to make the circuit of the earth—still onward flows the tide of human life—that inexhaustible race which has

cleared the forests of Canada, built the cities and made all the railroads of the States, given thousands to the red plains of the Crimea, overran California and peopled Australia —the race whose destiny has made them the instruments of all civilization, though they have never reaped its benefits.

Yet we cannot believe that the Irish race is doomed for ever to work and suffer without the glory of success; for the Celtic element is necessary to humanity as a great factor in human progress. It is the subtle, spiritual fire that warms and permeates the ruder clay of other races, giving them new, vivid, and magnetic impulses to growth and expansion.

The children of the early wanderers from the Isles of the Sea will still continue to fulfil their mission as world-workers and world-movers. Across the breadth of earth they will found new nations, each a greater and a stronger Ireland, where they will have the certainty of power, station, and reward denied them at home. But neither change nor progress nor the severing ocean will destroy the electric chain that binds them lovingly to their ancient mother in that true sympathy with country and kinship that ever burns in the Irish heart.

The new Ireland across the seas, whether in America or in Australia, will still cherish with sacred devotion the beautiful legends, the pathetic songs, the poetry and history and the heroic traditions of the old, well-loved country as eternal verses of the Bible of humanity; all the light and music of the fanciful fairy period, such as I have tried to gather into a focus in these volumes, along with the holy memories of those

martyrs of our race whose names are for ever associated with the words Liberty and Nationhood, but whose tragic fate has illustrated so many mournful pages in the history of the Irish past.

On the Ancient Races of Ireland.[1]

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That there was a time—after "the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, and separated the dry land from the sea"—when the present British Isles formed a continuous and integral portion of the European Continent, is the received opinion of the scientific. With that continuity of surface (whether before or after the glacial period matters not in the present inquiry) there was, we know, a uniform dispersion of vegetable and animal life over this portion of the globe; and so long as this country enjoyed the temperature and climate it now possesses, it must have been an emerald land—humid, green, and fertile, affording pasturage and provender for the largest herbivoræ—the mammoth, elephant, and musk ox, the reindeer, the wild boar, and perhaps even the woolly rhinoceros. The primitive races of horned cattle, possibly the red deer, and undoubtedly the largest and noblest of cervine creatures, the gigantic Irish deer, or *Cervus megaceros*, besides the wild pig, and

[1] Extracts from the Address to the Anthropological Section of the British Association. Belfast, 1874. By Sir William Wilde, M.D., M.R.I.A., Chevalier of the Swedish Order of the North Star.

smaller mammals, as well as birds and fishes innumerable, must then have existed here.

How long that condition of the land known now as Ireland existed, what geological revolutions occurred, or what time elapsed during its continuance, is but matter of speculation; but a "repeal of the union" took place, and Great Britain and Ireland became as they now are, and as they are likely to remain, geographically separated, although united in interest as well as government. In all probability the great pine forests, with some of the yews, the oaks, and the birch, had at this time been submerged beneath the lowest strata of our bogs.

It was after this epoch, I believe, that man first set foot upon the shores of Erin—a country well wooded, abundantly stocked with animals, and abounding in all nature's blessings suited to the well-being of the human race; with fowls in its woods and on its shores; fish in its seas, lakes, and rivers; deer and other game in its forest glades, oxen on its pastures, fuel in its bogs; and a climate, although moist and variable, on the whole mild and temperate.

Let us now go back for a moment and take a glance at the map of the world. The sacred writings tell us, and the investigations of historians, antiquarians, and philologists confirm the statement, that the cradle of mankind was somewhere between the Caspian Sea and the great River Euphrates. Without entering too minutely into the subject, I may state briefly that the human family separated in process of time into three great divisions—the African, the Asiatic, and the Indo-European. With the latter only we have to deal. As population increased, it threw off its out-

shoots; and emigration, the great safeguard of society, and the ordained means of peopling as well as cultivating and civilizing the earth, began to impel the races and tribes still farther and farther from the birthplace of humanity. But in those days the process was somewhat slower and more gradual than that which now sends an Irish family across 3500 miles of ocean in a week.

With but the rudest means of transit, hordes of the primitive races passed up the banks of the great rivers, the Euphrates, the Nile, the Volga, the Danube, and the Rhone; while other tribes, in all likelihood more advanced and cultivated, wandered along the coasts, peopling as they went the northern shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

That an early and uncultivated people passed up the Danube in their immigration, and settled for centuries on its banks, when Europe was a tangled wilderness, inhabited by the auroch and the gigantic deer, there can be no manner of doubt; for they have left memorials of their existence in the unerring and enduring remains of their sepulchres, their tools, and weapons, from the Black Sea to Switzerland and Savoy. In Switzerland this primitive people rested for a considerable period, perhaps for many centuries, forming for themselves those peculiar piled lacustrine habitations on the shores of its picturesque inland waters, known as "Pfaulbauten"—the analogues, and in all probability the types, of the crannoges recently discovered in Ireland and Scotland, to which countries the scattered fragments of that race finally carried this special form of domestic architecture. The lowest strata of implements were deposited be-

neath the sites of these pfaulbauten; and in some of the more ancient ones the only remains are those of stone, flint, and pottery—the former resembling in a remarkable manner the stone tools and weapons of the primitive Irish.

What the language of this early Helvetian people was, we have no means of ascertaining; but that their exodus was one of haste and compulsion, and probably the result of invasion by a superior and more cultivated race, is almost certain. Driven from their mountain homes, they passed down the banks of the Rhine and the Elbe, and helped to people North-western Europe, forming with those who arrived coastwise the great nation of the Gauls and Belgæ. It is not unlikely that this littoral wave of population carried with them the metallurgic arts; for we find in their tombs and barrows on the coasts of Spain, France, and Brittany, bronze celts identical in shape with some of those discovered in our own country.

Still passing westwards towards the setting sun, some members of this early people stood at length face to face with the white cliffs of Kent. Impelled by curiosity and the thirst for knowledge, man's undeviating enterprize soon sent these hardy people across the narrow strait that divides Britain from the Continent of Europe, centuries before the ships of Tarshish voyaged from Tyre and Sidon to trade with Britain for the tin of Cornwall, to alloy, harden, and beautify into bronze the copper with which Solomon decorated the temple of Jerusalem.

To the restless Celt the breadth of this new possession was but a slight impediment to his western progress, and once more he looked upon the blue waters of the salt sea,

and beyond them, to the green hills of Erin. A plank—a single-piece canoe—formed out of an oak-tree by fire and a sharp stone, or a wicker curragh covered with hides, would soon waft him from Portpatrick to Donaghadee, or even from Anglesea to Howth.

Here, then, the story of our race begins, and the immediate object of this inquiry commences. That man, as he first stood on this island, was in a rude, uncultivated state, without a knowledge of letters or manufactures—skilled in those arts only by which, as a nomad hunter and fisher, he supported life and ministered to his simple wants—there can be no manner of doubt. Clad in the skins of animals he slew, which were sewn together with their sinews or intestines—his weapons and tools formed of flint, stone, bone, wood or horn—his personal decoration, shells, amber, attractive pebbles collected on the beach, or the teeth of animals strung together in a rude necklace, or bound round the wrists and arms; and his religion, if any, Pagan, Sun-worship, or Druidism, man first stood, in all probability, on the north-eastern shores of Erin. It may be unpalatable to our national vanity to learn that the early colonists of Ireland did not come here clad in purple and gold direct from Phœnicia, in brazen-prowed triremes, with the mariner's compass and the quadrant; or stood for the first time upon the shores of Hibernia armed *cap-à-pied* in glittering armour, as Minerva sprang from the front of Jove; but it is, nevertheless, indisputably true, that the first people were such as I have described them.

No date can be assigned to the period of the first inhabitation, but as evidence of the primitive condition of the

race it is sufficient to state that human bodies clad in deer-skin have been discovered in our bogs; that flint weapons in abundance have been found all over Ireland, but especially in the North, where that peculiar lithological condition chiefly exists; and that stone tools have been dug up in thousands all over the country, but more particularly from the beds of our rivers, marking the sites of contested fords, which were the scenes of sanguinary conflicts, as on the Shannon and the Bann; and that all these are referrible to a period when the Irish had no knowledge of metals, and could neither spin nor weave.

To Northern archæologists belongs the credit of that theory which divides the ages of man according to the material evidences of the arts of bygone times, as into those of stone, of copper, gold, and bronze, and of iron and silver. While I have no doubt that, generally speaking, such was the usual progress of development in those particulars, I deny that this division can, as a rule, be applied to Ireland, where undoubtedly each period overlapped the succeeding, so as to mix the one class of implement with another, even as I myself have seen on the great cultivated plain of Tyre harrow-pins formed of flints and sharp stones stuck into the under surface of a broad board; and on that battle field—

> "Where Persia's victim horde
> First bowed beneath the brunt of Hella's sword,"

I have picked up flint and obsidian arrow-heads, although we know that the Athenians, whose remains still lie beneath the tumulus of Marathon, gave way before the long-handled metallic spears of Asia; and the stone missile, in

one of its most formidable shapes, is not yet abandoned in this country.

I hold it as susceptible of demonstration, that man in similar stages of his career all over the world acts alike, so far as is compatible with climate, his wants, and the materials that offer to his hand, even from the banks of the Niger or Zambesi to the islands of the South Sea, or the regions inhabited by the Laps and Esquimaux. Thus, whenever man acquires or discovers a new art, he first applies it to continue the fashion of its predecessor, until accident, necessity, or ingenuity, induces him to modify the reproduction. The first arrow-head and spear is almost the same all over the world, and is the type of that in metal; and the stone celt or hatchet formed, as I have proved elsewhere, the model for the copper or bronze implement for a like use in both ancient Etruria and ancient Ireland.

Discussions may arise as to whether our knowledge of metals was a separate, independent discovery of our own, or was acquired by intercourse with other nations more advanced than ourselves. In answer thereto I can only say that we have no evidence or authority for the latter supposition; and that, as we possessed abundant materials on the one hand, and had sufficient native ingenuity on the other, it is most likely that our discovery of metals—at least of gold, copper, and tin—was independent of extrinsic influence. So far removed from the centres of civilization, unconquered by the Roman legion, uninfluenced by Saxon or Frankish art, and with undoubted evidences of development and styles of art peculiar to ourselves, both in form and decoration, it is but fair, until some stronger arguments have

been brought against it, to believe that we were the discoverers and smelters of our minerals, and the fabricators of our metallic weapons, tools, and ornaments. That some Grecian influence pervaded the early Irish metallurgic art, as exhibited by some of our leaf-shaped sword blades, is true; but it is an exceptional instance, and the form is common to almost all countries in which bronze sword blades have been found.

With regard to the dwellings of the early race we are not left to mere conjecture, for not long ago a log hut was discovered fourteen feet below the surface of a bog in the county of Donegal. This very antique dwelling was twelve feet square, and nine high; and consisted of an upper and lower chamber, which were probably mere sleeping apartments. The oaken logs of which it was constructed are believed to have been hewn with stone hatchets, some of which were found on the premises, thus identifying it with the pre-metallic period of our history. Man soon becomes gregarious, and passes from the hunter and the fisher to the shepherd, and thence to the agriculturist. The land is cleared of wood; the wild animals either die out, or are rendered subservient to his will. The domestication of animals in most instances precedes, and always accompanies, the pastoral state of existence; and to that condition the patriarchal stage ensues, and afterwards that of the monarchical. To such phases of development, from the age of escape from the rudest barbarism, to the most cultivated condition in government, polite literature, art and science, Ireland was, I believe, no exception. Of the shepherd state we still possess the most abundant proofs, in the numerous earthen raths, lisses, and

forts scattered all over the country, and from which so many of our townlands and other localities take their names; but especially marking the sites of the primitive inhabitation on our goodly pastures, although now mere grassy, annular elevations, varying in area from a few perches to several acres, and in many instances alone preserved by the hallowed traditions or popular superstitions of the people.

Such of those landmarks of the past as still remain, out of thousands that have been obliterated, show us that in those parts of Ireland, at least, where they exist, there was once a dense population, even during the shepherd stage of its inhabitation. And if in the progress of events, and by that cataclysm uncontrolled by human agency, and brought about by influences that we have so recently mourned over and still deplore, but could not prevent, we are now again becoming a pastoral people, we are only returning to that state of existence for which this country is peculiarly adapted, and was, I believe, originally intended—that of being the greatest grass and green-crop soil and climate in the world.

The pastoral was undoubtedly the normal, one of the oldest, and beyond all question, the longest continued state in Ireland; and, although changed by internal dissensions, invasion, confiscation, and foreign rule, is still remembered by the people among whom its influence, slumbering, but not dead, now and then crops out in questions of "tenant right." Years ago I showed, from the animal remains found in our forts, bogs, and crannoges, that centuries upon centuries before short-horned improved breeds of cattle and sheep commanded at our agricultural shows the admiration of Europe, we had here breeds of oxen which are not now

surpassed by the best races of Holland and Great Britain; and which are unequalled in the present day even by those on the fertile plains of Meath, Limerick, or Roscommon, or throughout the golden vale of Tipperary. We were then a cattle-rearing, flesh-eating people; our wealth was our cattle; our wars were for our cattle; the ransom of our chieftains was in cattle; our taxes were paid in cattle; the price paid for our most valuable manuscripts was so many cows. Even in comparatively modern times our battle cloaks were made of leather; our traffic and barter were the Pecuaniæ of our country; and the "Tain-bo-Cuailne," the most famous metrical romance of Europe, after the "Neibe lungenlied," is but the recital of a cattle raid from Connaught into Louth during the reign of Mave, Queen of Connaught—a personage transmitted to us by Shakspeare, as the Queen Mab of the "Midsummer Night's Dream." And, although the Anglo-Norman invasion is usually attributed to the love of an old, one-eyed, hoarse-voiced, King of Leinster, sixty years of age, for Dervorgil (attractive, we must presume, though but little his junior in years), and who became the Helen of the Irish Iliad, when "the valley lay smiling before her," she was but an insignificant item in the stock abduction from the plains of Breffny along the boggy slopes of Shemore.

The Boromean, or cattle tribute, which the King of Tara demanded from the Leinstermen, was perhaps the cause of the greatest intestinal feud which ever convulsed so small a space of European ground for so great a length of time. This triennial cattle tax, besides 5,000 ounces of silver, 5,000 cloaks, and 5,000 brazen vessels, consisted of 15,000

head of cattle of different descriptions, the value of which, at the present price of stock, would amount to about £130,000. The cattle tribute also paid to the Prince or petty King of Cashel upwards of a thousand years ago was 6,500 cows, 4,500 oxen, 4,500 swine, and 1,200 sheep; in all, 16,700, or, at the present value of stock, between £80,000 and £100,000. In addition to which we read of horses and valuables of various descriptions.

Brian O'Kennedy, who drove the Norsemen from the shores of Clontarf, derived his cognomen of Borrome from his reimposition of this cattle tax. And in the *Leabhar-na-Garth*, or ancient Book of Rights and Privileges of the Kings of Erin, the cattle statistics, as they are there set forth, show that the Irish were solely a pastoral people; and the whole text and tenor of the Irish annals and histories, and the notices of the wars of the Desmonds and of O'Neil, confirm this view.

The great raths of Ireland, where the people enclosed their cattle by night, have been erroneously termed "Danish Forts," but when the shannaghees are pressed for further information as to the date of their erection they say, "They were made by them ould Danes that came over with Julius Cæsar." If, however, inquiry be made of the old illiterate Irish-speaking population, they will tell you that they were made by "the good people," and are inhabited by the fairies. Hence the veneration that has in a great measure tended to their preservation; and I have no doubt that the ancient indigenous and venerated thorns that still decorate their slopes or summits are the veritable descendants of

the quickset hedges that helped to form the breastworks, or staked defences, on their summits.

These forts are almost invariably to be found in the fattest pastures; so that if any of my friends were in the present day to ask me where they could best invest in land, I would fearlessly answer, "Wherever you find most ancient raths remaining;" and I know that many of our cattle prizes have been carried off by sheep and oxen fed upon the grass lands cleared and fertilized by the early Celts more than a thousand years ago, and a sod of which has not been turned for centuries. They were not originally the gentle slopes that now diversify the surface, but consisted in steep ramparts or earthworks, with an external ditch, on which a stout paling was erected against man or beast, a form of structure still seen in the kraal of the New Zealander. The Irish rath-maker was an artificer of skill, and held in high esteem, and occupied a dignified position at the great feasts of Tara —second only to the ollamh and the physician. That the soil of which they were constructed had been not only originally rich, but had been subjected to man's industry, is proved by the fact, that it is now frequently turned out upon the neighbouring sward as one of the best of manures. Within these raths, some of which had double, and even treble entrenchments, were erected the dwellings of the people and their chiefs, the latter of whom were often interred within the mounds, or beneath the cromlechs that still exist in their interior, as, for example, in the "Giant's Ring," near Belfast. In some instances they also contained in their sides and centres stone caves, that were probably used as store-houses, granaries, or places of security.

The earliest historic race of Ireland was a pastoral people called Firbolgs, said to be of Greek or Eastern origin; probably a branch of that great Celtic race which, having passed through Europe and round its shores, found a resting-place at last in Ireland. Of the Fomorians, Nemedians, and other minor invaders, we need not speak, as they have left nothing by which to track their footsteps. The old annalists bring them direct from the Ark, and in a straight line from Japhet. The coming of Pharaoh's daughter from Egypt with her ships may be also considered apocryphal. But the Firbolgs begin our authentic history. They had laws and social institutions, and established a monarchical government at the far-famed Hill of Tara, about which our early centres of civilization sprung, and where we have now most of those great pasture-lands—those plains of Meath that can beat the world for their fattening qualities, and which supply neighbouring countries with their most admired meats.

I cannot say that the Firbolg was a cultivated man, but I think he was a shepherd and an agriculturist. I doubt if he knew anything, certainly not much, of metallurgy; but it does not follow that he was a mere savage, no more than the Maories of New Zealand were when we first came in contact with them.

The Firbolgs were a small, straight-haired, swarthy race, who have left a portion of their descendants with us to this very day. A genealogist (their own countryman resident in Galway about two hundred years ago) described them as dark-haired, talkative, guileful, strolling, unsteady, "disturbers of every Council and Assembly," and "promoters

of discord." I believe they, together with the next two races about to be described, formed the bulk of our so-called Celtic population—combative, nomadic on opportunity, enduring, litigious, but feudal and faithful to their chiefs; hard-working for a spurt (as in their annual English emigration); not thrifty, but, when their immediate wants are supplied, lazy, especially during the winter.

To these physical and mental characters described by MacFirbis let me add those of the unusual combination of blue or blue-grey eyes and dark eyelashes with a swarthy complexion. This peculiarity I have only remarked elsewhere in Greece; the mouth and upper gum is not good, but the nose is usually straight. In many of this and the next following race there was a peculiarity that has not been alluded to by writers—the larynx, or, as it used to be called, the *pomum Adami*, was remarkably prominent, and became more apparent from the uncovered state of the neck. The sediment of this early people still exists in Ireland, along with the fair-complexioned Dananns, and forms the bulk of the farm-labourers, called in popular phraseology *Spalpeens*, that yearly emigrate to England. In Connaught they now chiefly occupy a circle which includes the junction of the counties of Mayo, Galway, Roscommon, and Sligo. They, with their fair-faced brothers (at present the most numerous), are also to be found in Kerry and Donegal; and they nearly all speak Irish.

By statistics procured from our Great Midland Western Railway alone, I learn that on an average 30,000 of these people, chiefly the descendants of the dark Firbolgs and the fair Dananns, emigrate annually to England for harvest

work, to the great advantage of the English farmer and the Irish landlord. The acreage of arable land for these people runs from two to six acres.

Connecting this race with the remains of the past, I am of opinion that they were the first rath or earthen-mound and enclosure makers; that they mostly buried their dead without cremation, and, in cases of distinguished personages, beneath the cromlech or the tumulus. Their heads were oval or long in the anteroposterior diameter, and rather flattened at the sides: examples of these I have given and descanted upon when I first published my Ethnological Researches, which have been fully confirmed by the late Andreas Retzius. It is, however, unnecessary, even if space or advisability permitted, for me to allude to such matters, as that great work the "Crania Britannica" has lithographed typical specimens of this long-headed race.

The next immigration we hear of in the "Annals" is that of the *Tuatha-de-Dananns*, a large, fair-complexioned, and very remarkable race; warlike, energetic, progressive, skilled in metal work, musical, poetical, acquainted with the healing art, skilled in Druidism, and believed to be adepts in necromancy and magic, no doubt the result of the popular idea respecting their superior knowledge, especially in smelting and in the fabrication of tools, weapons, and ornaments. From these two races sprang the Fairy Mythology of Ireland.

It is strange that, considering the amount of annals and legends transmitted to us, we have so little knowledge of Druidism or Paganism in ancient Ireland. However, it may be accounted for in this wise: That those who took

down the legends from the mouths of the bards and annalists, or those who subsequently transcribed them, were Christian missionaries whose object was to obliterate every vestige of the ancient forms of faith.

The Dananns spoke the same language as their predecessors, the Firbolgs. They met and fought for the sovereignty. The "man of metal" conquered and drove a great part of the others into the islands on the coast, where it is said the Firbolg race took their last stand. Eventually, however, under the influence of a power hostile to them both, these two peoples coalesced, and have to a large extent done so up to the present day. They are the true old Irish peasant and small farming class.

The Firbolg was a bagman, so called, according to Irish authorities, because he had to carry up clay in earthen bags to those terraces in Greece now vine-clad. As regards the other race there is more difficulty in the name. Tuath or Tuatha means a tribe or tribe-district in Irish. Danann certainly sounds very Grecian; and if we consider their remains, we find the long, bronze, leaf-shaped sword, so abundant in Ireland, identical with weapons of the same class found in Attica and other parts of Greece.

Then, on the other hand, their physiognomy, their fair or reddish hair, their size, and other circumstances, incline one to believe that they came down from Scandinavian regions after they had passed up as far as they thought advisable into North-western Europe. If the word Dane was known at the time of their arrival here, it would account for the designation of many of our Irish monuments as applied by Molyneux and others. Undoubtedly the Danann tribes

presented Scandinavian features, but did not bring anything but Grecian art. After the "Stone period," so called, of which Denmark and the south of Sweden offer such rich remains, I look upon the great bulk of the metal work of the North, especially in the swords in the Copenhagen and Stockholm Museums, as Asiatic; while Ireland possesses not only the largest native collection of metal weapon-tools, usually denominated "celts," of any country in the world, but the second largest amount of swords and battle-axes. And moreover these, and all our other metal articles, show a well-defined rise and development from the simplest and rudest form in size and use to that of the most elaborately constructed and the most beautifully adorned.

I believe that these Tuatha-de-Dananns, no matter from whence they came, were, in addition to their other acquirements, great masons, although not acquainted with the value of cementing materials. I think they were the builders of the great stone Cahirs, Duns, Cashels, and Caves in Ireland; while their predecessors constructed the earthen works, the raths, circles, and forts that diversify the fields of Erin. The Dananns anticipated Shakespeare's grave-digger, for they certainly made the most lasting sepulchral monuments that exist in Ireland, such, for example, as New Grange, Douth, Knowth, and Slieve-na-Calleagh and other great cemeteries. Within the interior and around these tombs were carved, on unhewn stones, certain archaic markings, spires, volutes, convolutes, lozenge-shaped devices, straight, zigzag, and curved lines, and incised indentations, and a variety of other insignia, which, although not expressing language, were symbolical, and had

an occult meaning known only to the initiated. These markings, as well as those upon the urns, were copied in the decorations of the gold and bronze work of a somewhat subsequent period. The Dananns conquered the inferior tribes in two celebrated pitched battles, those of the Northern and Southern Moytura. On these fields we still find the caves, the stone circles, the monoliths, and dolmans or cromlechs that marked particular events, and the immense cairns that were raised in honour of the fallen chieftains.

Although many of the warriors of the Firbolgs fled to their island fastnesses on the coasts of Galway and Donegal, no doubt a large portion of them remained in the inland parts of the country, and in that very locality to which I have adverted, which is almost midway between the sites of the two battles, in a line stretching between Mayo and Sligo, where in time the two races appear to have coalesced by that natural law which brings the dark and the fair together.

Moreover it has been recorded that the conquering race sent their small dark opponents into Connaught, while they themselves took possession of the rich lands further east, and not only established themselves at Tara but spread into the south. It is remarkable that in time large numbers of the Dananns themselves were banished to the West, and likewise that the last forcible deportation of the native Irish race (so late as the seventeenth century) was when the people of this province got the choice of going "to Connaught or Hell," in the former of which, possibly, they joined some of the original stock. The natural beauty of the lakes and mountains of Connaught remains as it was

thousands of years ago; but no doubt if some of the legislators of the period to which I have already referred could now behold its fat pasture-plains, they might prefer them to the flax lands of Ulster.

These Dananns had a globular form of head, of which I have already published examples. For the most part I believe they burned their dead or sacrificed to their manes, and placed an urn with its incinerated contents—human or animal—in the grave, where the hero was either stretched at length or crouched in an attitude similar to that adopted by the ancient Peruvians, as I have elsewhere explained. These Irish urns, which are the earliest relics of our ceramic art that have come down to the present time, are very graceful in form, and some of them most beautifully decorated, as may be seen in our various museums.

Specimens of this Danann race still exist, but have gradually mixed with their forerunners to the present day. Here is what old MacFirbis wrote of them two hundred years ago: "Every one who is fair-haired, vengeful, large, and every plunderer, professors of musical and entertaining performances, who are adepts of Druidical and magical arts, they are the descendants of the Tuatha-de-Dananns." They were not only fair but sandy in many instances, and consequently extensively freckled.

It is affirmed that the Dananns ruled in Ireland for a long time, until another inroad was made into the island by the Milesians—said to be brave, chivalrous, skilled in war, good navigators, proud, boastful, and much superior in outward adornment as well as mental culture, but probably not better armed than their opponents. They deposed the

three last Danann kings and their wives, and rose to be, it is said, the dominant race—assuming the sovereignty, becoming the aristocracy and landed proprietors of the country, and giving origin to those chieftains that afterwards rose to the title of petty kings, and from whom some of the best families in the land with anything like Irish names claim descent, and particularly those with the prefix of the "O" or the "Mac." When this race arrived in Ireland I cannot tell, but it was some time prior to the Christian era. It is said they came from the coast of Spain, where they had long remained after their Eastern emigration.

Upon the site of what is believed to be the ancient Brigantium, now the entrance to the united harbours of Corunna and Ferrol, stands the great lighthouse known to all ships passing through the Bay of Biscay. Within this modern structure still exists the celebrated "Pharos of Hercules," which I investigated and described many years ago. That tower, it was said in metaphorical language, commanded a view of Ireland, and as such became the theme of Irish poems and legends. Certain it is that sailing north or north-westward from it the ships of the sons of Milesius and their followers could have reached Ireland without much coasting. If the story of Breogan's Tower is true, then it must have been erected in the time of lime-and-mortar building, and that is during the Roman occupation of Iberia and Gaul. How many thousands, rank and file, of these Spanish Milesians came here in their six or eight galleys and tried the fortunes of war from "the summit of the ninth wave from the shore" and conquered the entire Danann, Firbolg, and Fomorian population, I am

unable to give the slightest inkling of, no more than I can of the so-called Phœnician intercourse with this country. Perhaps without going into the fanciful descriptions of the "Battle of Ventry Harbour," or the southern conquest of Ireland by the Iberian Milesians, we may find some more trustworthy illustrations of Spanish dwellings in the architecture of the town of Galway, and some picturesque representatives in the lithe upright figures and raven-haired, but blue-eyed maidens of the City of the Tribes. Here is what old MacFirbis, who, I suppose, claimed descent from the sons of Milesius, wrote about them: "Every one who is white of skin, brown of hair, bold, honourable, daring, prosperous, bountiful in the bestowal of property, and who is not afraid of battle or combat, they are the descendants of the sons of Milesius in Erin."

This high panegyric is only equalled by the prose and verse compositions of the ancient bards and rhymers and the modern historians, who have recorded the deeds of the great warriors, Ith, Heber, and Heremon, whose descendants boast to have been the rulers of the land. Even Moore, although he wrote such beautiful lyrics concerning this race in his early days, yet when he came to study history, he felt the same difficulty I do now. I do not dispute their origin or supremacy; but I fail to distinguish their early customs, their remains, or race from those of the Firbolgs or Dananns whom they conquered, and who left undoubted monuments peculiar to their time.

Now all these peoples—the piratical navigator along our coasts, the mid-Europe primitive shepherd and cultivator, the Northern warrior, and the Iberian ruler—were, according

to my view, all derived from the one Celtic stock. They spoke the same language, and their descendants do so still. When they acquired a knowledge of letters they transmitted their history through the Irish language. No doubt they fused; but somehow a quick fusion of races has not been the general characteristic of the people of this country. Unlike the Anglo-Norman in later times, the Milesian was a long way from home; the rough sea of the Bay of Biscay rolled between him and his previous habitat; and if he became an absentee he was not likely to find much of his possessions on his return. It is to be regretted that while we have here such a quantity of poetical and traditional material respecting the Milesian invasion of Ireland, the Spanish annals or traditions have given us but very little information on that subject.

It would be most desirable if the Government or some Irish authority would send a properly instructed commissioner to investigate the Spanish annals, and see whether there is anything relating to the Spanish migrations to Ireland remaining in that country.

Besides the sparse introduction of Latin by Christian missionaries in the fifth century, some occasional Saxon words springing from peaceful settlers along our coasts and in commercial emporiums, and whatever Danish had crept into our tongue around those centres where the Scandinavians chiefly located themselves, and which were principally proper names of persons and places that became fixed in our vernacular, we find but one language among the Irish people until the arrival of the Anglo-Normans at the end of the twelfth century.

The linguistic or philological evidence on this subject is clearly decisive. The residue of the early races already described spoke one language, called Gaelic; so did the Scotch, the Welsh, and probably, in early times, the Britons and the Bretons. It was not only the popular conversational tongue used in the ordinary intercourse of life, but it was also employed in genealogies, annals, and other records in a special character, not quite peculiar to this country, but then common in Europe. Much has been said about the necessity for a glossary of our ancient MSS., such as those at Saint Gall, in Trinity College, in the Royal Irish Academy, and in Belgian and English libraries; but there are very few ancient languages that do not require to be glossed in the present day, even as the words of Chaucer do.

The Government are now, under the auspices of our Master of the Rolls, and the special direction and supervision of Mr. J. T. Gilbert, giving coloured photographs of some of our ancient writings, and have promised that some of our remaining manuscripts will be translated. I see no occasion now for waiting for more elaborated philological dictionaries or glossaries while there are still some few Irish scholars in this country capable of giving a free but tolerably literal translation of these records that do not require any great acumen in rendering them into English. Is history to wait upon the final decision of philologists respecting a word or two in a manuscript, and decide as to whether it may be of Sanscrit or any other origin?

No doubt some of my hearers may ask, What about the Oghams (or Ohams)? do they not show a very early know-

ledge of an alphahet? As yet this is a moot question. A rude pillar-stone, having upon it a tolerably straight edge, was in early times notched along its angle which served as a stem-line by nicks formed on it, and straight or oblique lines, singly or in clusters, proceeding from the stem. The decipherers of these inscriptions have, one and all, agreed upon the fact that these lines represented letters, syllables, or words, and that the language is either Irish or Latin. Therefore the persons who made them must have been aware of alphabetic writing and grammar. These carved monoliths are chiefly found in Kerry and Cork. Upon some of them Christian emblems are figured. The incising of the stone has evidently been performed by some rude instrument, either a flint or metallic pick; and it is remarkable that these pillars present scarcely any amount of dressing.

In Connaught, in my youth, the exception in remote districts was where the person spoke *both* English and Irish. In 1851, when we first took a census of the Irish-speaking population, after the country had lost three-quarters of a million of people, chiefly of the Irish race, we had then (to speak in round numbers) one and a half millions of Irish-speaking population. In 1861 they had fallen off by nearly half a million; and upon the taking of the last census in 1871 the entire Irish-speaking population was only 817,865. The percentages, according to the total population in our different provinces, were these: In Leinster 1·2, in Munster 27·7, in Ulster 4·6, and in Connaught 39·0; for the total of Ireland 15·1. Kilkenny and Louth are the counties of Leinster where the language is most spoken. In Munster

they are Kerry, Clare, and Waterford; in Ulster, Donegal, where 28 per cent. of the population speak Irish; but in Connaught, to which I have already alluded as containing the remnant of the early Irish races, we have no less than 56 per cent. of Irish-speaking population in the counties of Mayo and Galway respectively. Of my own knowledge I can attest that a great many of these people cannot speak English. We thus see that of the population of Ireland, which in the present day might be computed at about five and a half millions, there were, at the time of taking the census in April, 1871, only 817,865; and I think I may prophecy that that is the very largest number that in future we will ever have to record. On the causes of this decadence it is not my province to descant. These Celts have been the great pioneers of civilization, and are now a power in the world. Are they not now numerically the dominant race in America? and have they not largely peopled Australia and New Zealand?

We have now arrived at a period when you might naturally expect the native annalist to make some allusion to conquest or colonization by the then mistress of the world. Without offering any reason for it, I have here only to remark that neither as warriors nor colonizers did the Romans ever set foot in Ireland; and hence the paucity of any admixture of Roman art amongst us.

To fill up a hiatus which might here occur in our migrations, I will mention a remarkable circumstance. A Christian youth of Romano-Saxon parentage, and probably of patrician origin, was carried off in a raid of Irish marauders, and employed as a swine-herd in this very Ulster, the country of

the Dalaradians, and lived here for several years, learning our customs and speaking our language. He escaped, however, to Munster, and thence to his native land of Britain or Normandy, from whence he returned in A.D. 432 with friends, allies, and missionaries, and passing in his galley into the mouth of the Boyne, walked up the banks of that famed stream, raised the paschal fire at Slane, and speedily introduced Christianity throughout Ireland.

In thus briefly alluding to the labours of St. Patrick, I wish to be understood to say that about the time of his mission there was much Saxon intercourse with this country, and the great missionary had not only many friends but several relatives residing here, and some of them on the very banks of the Boyne; and I believe that a considerable amount of civilization and some knowledge of Christianity had been introduced long previously; so that, although old King Laoghaire or Loury and his Druids did not bow the knee to the Most High God, nor accept the teaching of the beautiful hymn that Patrick and his attendants chanted as they passed up the grassy slopes of Tara, still there were many hundred people in Ireland ready to receive the glad tidings of the gospel of salvation.

Having finished with the Milesians, we now come to the Danes (so-called), the Scandinavians or Norsemen—the pagan Sea-Kings who made inroads on our coasts, despoiled our churches and monasteries, but at the same time, it must be confessed, helped to establish the commercial prosperity of some of our cities and towns from 795 to the time of the battle of Clontarf, A.D. 1014, when the belligerent portion of the Scandinavians were finally expelled the country. During

the time I have specified, Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford belonged to these Northern people. They not only coasted round the island and never lost an opportunity of pillage and plunder, but they passed through the interior and carried their arms into the very centre of the land. The Danes left us very little ornamental work beyond what they lavished upon their swords and helmets; but, on the other hand, it should be borne in mind that there are no Irish antiquities, either social, warlike, or ecclesiastical, in the Scandinavian Museums.

Concerning their ethnological characters, I must again refer to the "Crania Britannica." In the records they were designated strangers, foreigners, pagans, gentiles, and also white and black foreigners, so that there were undoubtedly two races—the dark, and the fair or red, like as in the case of the Firbolgs or Dananns. They were also styled "Azure Danes," probably on account of the shining hue of their armour.

I believe the fair section of that people to have been of Norwegian origin, while the dark race came from Jutland and the coast of Sweden; and both by the Orkneys, the coasts of Scotland, and the Isle of Man. Their skulls were large and well formed; they had a thorough knowledge of metal work, and especially iron; and, as I have shown elsewhere, their swords and spears were of great size and power, the former wielded as a slashing-weapon, while those of their early opponents were of bronze, weak, and intended for stabbing. In nowhere else in Europe (that I am aware of) have these rounded, pointed, or bevelled heavy iron swords been found except in Ireland and Norway.

Large quantities of Danish remains have been discovered in deep sinkings made in Dublin; and several weapons, tools, and ornaments, believed to be of Scandinavian origin, have been found within a few inches of the surface on one of the battle-fields on the south side of the Liffey, within the last few years. Upon most of these I have already reported and given illustrations. I may mention one circumstance connected with this race. I never examined a battle-field of the Danes, nor a collection of Danish weapons or implements, that I did not find the well-adjusted scales and weights which the Viking had in his pocket for valuing the precious metals he procured either by conquest or otherwise.

Although considered hostile, these Scandinavian Vikings must have fraternized with the Irish. We know that they intermarried; for, among many other instances that might be adduced, I may mention that during the battle of Clontarf, when Sitric, the Danish king of Dublin, looked on the fight from the walls of the city, he was accompanied by his wife, the daughter of the aged king known as "Brian the Brave."

When, however, the Irish chieftains were not fighting with one another, they were often engaged in petty wars with the Scandinavians, who, in turn, were attacked by their own countrymen, the "Black Gentiles," especially on the plain of Fingall, stretching from Dublin to the Boyne, and which the white race chiefly occupied. It must not be supposed that the battle of Clontarf ended the Danish occupation of Ireland; they still held the cities of Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford at least, and largely promoted the commercial

prosperity in these localities—a prosperity which has not quite yet departed. I should like to present you with some remains of the Scandinavian language in Ireland, but the materials are very scanty.

We are now coming to a later period. The Romans had occupied Britain, the Saxons followed; the Danes had partial possession for a time; the Heptarchy prevailed until Harold, the last of the Saxon kings, fell at Hastings, and England bowed beneath that mixture of Norman, Gaulish, Scandinavian, and general Celtic blood that William brought with him from the shores of France. The Saxon dynasty was at an end, but the Britons of the day accepted their fate; and not only the soldiers, but the Norman barons fused with the people of that kingdom, and largely contributed to make it what it now is. This fusion of races, this assimilation of sentiments, this interchange of thought, this kindly culture, the higher elevating the lower, among whom they permanently reside, must always tend to great and good ends in raising a people to a nobler intellectual state.

The Anglo-Normans came here in 1172, a very mixed race, but their leaders were chiefly of French or Norman extraction. Why they came, or what they did, it is not for me to expatiate upon. I wish, however, to correct an assertion commonly made, to the effect that the Norman barons of Henry II. *then* conquered Ireland. They occupied some towns, formed a "Pale," levied taxes, sent in soldiery, distributed lands, and introduced a new language; but the "King's writ did not run;" the subjugation of Ireland did not extend over the country at large, and it remained till 1846 and the five or six following years to

complete the conquest of the Irish race, by the loss of a tuberous esculent and the Governmental alteration in the value of a grain of corn. Then there went to the workhouse or exile upwards of two millions of the Irish race, besides those who died of pestilence. Having carefully investigated and reported upon this last great European famine, I have come to the conclusion just stated, without taking into consideration its political, religious, or national aspects.

It appears to me that one of our great difficulties in Ireland has been the want of fusion—not only of races, but of opinions and sentiments, in what may be called a "give and take" system. As regards the intermixture, I think there cannot be a better one than the Saxon with the Celt. The Anglo-Normans, however, partially fused with the native Irish; for Strongbow married Eva the daughter of King Dermot; and from this marriage it has been clearly shown that Her Most Gracious Majesty the present Queen of Ireland and Great Britain is lineally descended. Several of the noble warriors who came over about that period have established great and widespread names in Ireland, among whom I may mention the Geraldines in Leinster, the De Burgos in Connaught, and the Butlers in Munster; and they and their descendants became, according to the old Latin adage, "more Irish than the Irish themselves."

Look what the intermixture of races has done for us in Ireland; the Firbolg brought us agriculture; the Danann the chemistry and mechanics of metal work; the Milesians beauty and governing power; the Danes commerce and navigation; the Anglo-Normans chivalry and organized

government; and, in later times, the French emigrants taught us an improved art of weaving.

It would be more political than ethnological were I to enter upon the discussion of that subsequent period which would conduct us to the days of Cromwell or the Boyne, or, perhaps, to later periods, involving questions not pertinent to the present subject.

But I must here say a word or two respecting Irish art. In architecture, in decorative tone-work, from archaic markings that gave a tone and character to all subsequent art, in our beauteous crosses, in our early metal work, in gold and bronze, carried on from the pagan to the Christian period, and in our gorgeously illuminated MS. books, we have got a style of art that is specially and peculiarly Irish, and that has no exact parallel elsewhere, and was only slightly modified by Norman or Frankish design.

Time passed, and events accumulated; political affairs intermingle, but the anthropologist should try and keep clear of them. At the end of the reign of Elizabeth a considerable immigration of English took place into the south of Ireland. Subsequently the historic episode of the "Flight of the Earls," O'Neil and O'Donnell, brought matters to a climax; and the early part of the reign of the first James is memorable for the "Plantation of Ulster," when a number of Celtic Scots with some Saxons returned to their brethren across the water; and about the same time the London companies occupied large portions of this fertile province, and the early Irish race were transplanted by the Protector to the West, as I have already stated. It must not be imagined that this was the first immigration. The

Picts passed through Ireland, and no doubt left a remnant behind them. And in consequence of contiguity, the Scottish people must early have settled upon our northern coasts. When the adventurous Edward Bruce made that marvellous inroad into Ireland at the end of the fourteenth century and advanced into the bowels of the land, he carried with him a Gaelic population cognate with our own people, and in all probability left a residue in Ulster, thus leavening the original Firbolgs, Tuatha-de-Danann, and Milesians, with the exception of the county of Donegal, which still holds a large Celtic population speaking the old Irish tongue, and retaining the special characters of that people as I have already described them. This Scotic race, as it now exists in Ulster, and of which we have specimens before us, I would sum up with three characteristics. That they were courageous is proved by their shutting the gates and defending the walls of Derry; that they were independent and lovers of justice has been shown by their establishment of tenant right; and that they were industrious and energetic is manifest by the manufactures of Belfast. Do not, I entreat my brethren of Ulster, allow these manufactures to be jeopardized, either by masters or men, by any disagreements, which must lead to the decay of the fairest and wealthiest province and one of the most beautiful cities in this our native land.

THE END.

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